

Y

ACC NO	FUND
LOC	PRICE
CLASS	
NO	YR

May 1998

**ANY PAGES, MAPS, TABLES
FIGURES, GRAPHS OR
PHOTOGRAPHS, MISSING FROM
THE DIGITAL COPY HAVE BEEN
EXCLUDED AT THE REQUEST OF
THE UNIVERSITY.**

Abstract:

This research is a qualitative study of consumer behaviour in tourism and specifically consumer satisfaction and dis-satisfaction (CS/D) with long-haul inclusive tours. An emphasis is placed on the supposed antecedents of CS/D - expectation, performance, disconfirmation, attribution, emotion, equity - and the change in CS/D through time.

The research rationale was orientated to both the academic world and the world of practical management.

A literature review and a series of interviews with senior management and directors of long-haul tour operators in Britain was followed by a participant observation case study on a long-haul tour of Malaysia and Singapore. A three-way perspective was sought on CS/D - from management, consumer service personnel and consumers.

An interpretative framework, which synthesises the description and analysis in the literature search, primary interviews and participant observation, outlines the process of CS/D formation. This includes the interaction of a vortex of antecedents - with performance at the core - which then passes through a filter relating to both the specific and general context surrounding the long-haul tour. Either immediate or delayed CS/D judgements for micro events is followed by subsequent action or inaction by an individual consumer and/or other consumers in a group, a tour leader, a ground handler and/or a tour operator. A feedback loop completes a micro event cycle and engenders a cumulative development of consumer certainty with regard to the judgement of CS/D through time.

Additionally, the study demonstrates the application and potential of participant observation - in lieu or in conjunction with other more familiar techniques - within both an academic and practical management perspective.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank a wide range of people who have helped in one way or another, sometimes unwittingly, towards the completion of this study:

The School of Business, Oxford Brookes University, who provided some release from other duties and also the monies for travel and so forth throughout the research.

The management of the tour operators who contributed their pressured time and were always welcoming - whether prior, during or subsequent to the management interviews.

Members of the participant observation tour group in Malaysia and Singapore who later indulged me with hospitality during interviews back in Britain.

'Asif', the tour leader in Malaysia and Singapore.

Ms. Aileen Harrison, internal supervisor, for all her thoughtful, patient and continuous encouragement - and above all unstinting enthusiasm.

Professor Mary Benwell and Dr. Brian Shaw for reading and commenting on various drafts as the research drew toward a conclusion.

All the colleagues, both within the Tourism Field and beyond at Oxford Brookes University, who turned up and asked questions in the research seminars.

The many exceptionally friendly and diverse Tourism Field students who made the 'day-job' so worthwhile.

And, finally, the friends who never stopped asking 'How is the Ph.D?'; my parents for inculcating the satisfaction and value of study; and, above all, Roni and my beautiful children Ori and Dan - without whom this would have been completed sooner but far less enjoyably.

Contents:

Abstract

Acknowledgements

Chapter 1:
Introduction **1**

- 1.0 Research title **1**
- 1.1 Personal, academic, practical management rationale
- 1.2 Research problem **3**
- 1.3 Structure and linkage **4**

Chapter 2:
CS/D - antecedents and development through time **8**

2.0 Overview **8**

2.1 Expectancy Disconfirmation **8**

- 2.1.1 Standards, appraisal and comparison **9**
- 2.1.2 Core psychological theory **11**
- 2.1.3 Criticism of Expectancy Disconfirmation **15**
- 2.1.4 Further Criticism **23**

2.2 Attribution **26**

- 2.2.1 Information **27**
- 2.2.2 Prior beliefs **28**
- 2.2.3 Motivations **29**
- 2.2.4 Locus, stability, control **30**
- 2.2.5 Consequence **32**

2.3 Emotion. **33**

- 2.3.1 Emotion states and traits **33**
- 2.3.2 Emotional dimensions and categories **34**
- 2.3.3 Empirical relevance **35**
- 2.3.4 Emotion and CS/D model **36**

2.4 Equity **40**

2.5 Interim Word **42**

Chapter 3:
Context **44**

3.0 Tourism and Services Management **44**

- 3.0.1 Generic service characteristics/tourism characteristics
- 3.0.2 In sum **49**

3.1 Tour Operation	50
3.2 Long-haul inclusive tours	50
3.3 Tour Destination	52
3.4 Satisfaction and Quality	53
3.4.1 Distinctiveness and commonality	53
3.4.2 Linkage	56
3.4.3 Consensus	57
3.5 Satisfaction, Price and Value	58
3.5.1 Price	58
3.5.2 Value	59
3.5.3 Price and Quality	60
Chapter 4: Methodology	62
4.0 General Overview	62
4.0.1 Rationale of Research Study	62
4.0.2 Research plan	62
4.0.3 Research problem	63
4.0.4 Review of related research	68
4.0.5 Definition of concepts, variables, and hypotheses	71
4.0.6 Selection of research design - descriptive, explanatory or causal	72
4.0.7 Selection of data collection techniques	73
4.0.8 Selection of subjects	76
4.0.9 Data processing and information analysis	76
4.0.10 Practical Rationale	79
4.0.11 Times Change	80
4.1 Stage 1 Exploratory Management Interviews	
4.1.1 Practical aims and relevant methodology findings	81
4.1.2 Further entry and progress	85
4.2 Stage 2 Extended Management Interviews	87
4.2.1 Interview design - outline philosophy and outline practice	87
4.2.2 Pre understanding	91
4.2.3 Practical organisation	95
4.3 Literature Search	105
4.4 Case Study	104
4.4.1 Choice and bias	104
4.4.2 Validity and reliability	110

4.4.3 Description, analysis, interpretation	112
4.5 Participant Observation.	113
4.5.1 Relationship alongside positivism	113
4.5.2 Key advantages and basic typology	115
4.5.3 Preferred conditions	116
4.5.4 Shuttle of observation and interaction	122
4.5.5 Wide focus and close focus	123
4.5.6 Trust	125
4.5.7 Method of record	126
4.5.8. Analysis	129
4.6 Post-tour Interviews	131
4.7 Post Script	131
Chapter 5:	
Management Interviews - Description and Analysis	132
5.0 Overview	132
5.1 Initial Response-What is satisfaction?	132
5.2 Expectation	134
5.2.1 Brochures	135
5.2.2 Tour Operator Contact	136
5.2.3 Retail Travel Agents	138
5.2.4 Consumer Events	139
5.3 Performance	140
5.3.1 Consumer	140
5.3.2 Consumer service personnel	141
5.3.3 Logistics and technical aspects	143
5.4 Attribution	144
5.5 Emotion	147
5.6 Equity	148
5.7 Satisfaction and time	150
5.7.1 Pre-tour, departure and pre-arrival	150
5.7.2 Beyond arrival	151
5.8 Identification/measurement/analysis of satisfaction	153

5.8.1 CSQs	153
5.8.2 Tour leader reports	154
5.8.3 Consumer letters	154
5.8.4 Other approaches	155

Chapter 6: Participant observation - description and analysis

6.0 Overview	156
6.1 First concern - the people search @ Heathrow and KL	158
6.2 Penang	163
6.3 Penang to Kuala Lumpur	173
6.4 Kuala Lumpur	179
6.5 KL to Tembeling and Tembeling to Kuala Tehan in Taman Negara Forest	183
6.6 Taman Negara: Kuala Tehan	188
6.7 Downstream and Jerantut	199
6.8 Kota Bahru	203
6.9 East Coast Transit	210
6.10 Mersing-Tioman Ferry	214
6.11 On Tioman - at the start	214
6.12 On Tioman - beyond the start	219
6.13 Singapore	230

Chapter 7: Interpretation

7.0 Overview	240
7.1 Interpretation framework	245
7.2 Antecedents and CS/D	247
7.2.1 Expectancy disconfirmation - standards, appraisal and comparison	248
7.2.2 Expectancy disconfirmation - brands, memories, learning bias, learning and management control.	

7.2.3 Performance within expectancy disconfirmation - the key antecedent	251
7.2.4 Attribution	253
7.2.5 Emotion	256
7.2.6 Equity	257
 7.3 Vortex of CS/D antecedents	 258
 7.4 Context	 259
7.4.1 Specific context	259
7.4.2 General context	263
 7.5 CS/D Judgement	 267
 7.6 Action and Inaction	 268
 7.7 Beyond Action and Inaction - CS/D through time	 271
 Chapter 8: Final Overview and restatement of research contribution	 275
 8.0 Summary	 275
 8.1 Research methodology	 275
 8.2 Antecedents of CS/D	 279
 8.3 CS/D process through time	 283
 8.4 Further Research	 285
 Appendices	 287
 Bibliography	 298

List of Figures:

Figure 4.1	Research programme through time and key events and understandings	64
Figure 6.1	EM Tour Itinerary - Malaysia and Singapore	157
Figure 7.1	Consumer Satisfaction / Dissatisfaction within tour	241
Figure 7.2	Consumer Satisfaction / Dissatisfaction Antecedent Vortex - Micro Event X	242
Figure 7.3	Time-Certainty CS/D Models	243
Figure 7.4	Inter-Event CS/D Development Through Time	244

Chapter 1 Introduction

Chapter 2 CS/D - Antecedents and antecedent temporal process	Chapter 3 Context	Chapter 4 Methodology	Chapter 5 Management interviews	Chapter 6 Participant observation	Chapter 7 Interpretation	Chapter 8 Final overview
--	----------------------	--------------------------	---------------------------------------	---	-----------------------------	--------------------------------

Chapter 1: Introduction.

1.0 Research title

This research thesis investigates 'Consumer Satisfaction and Dis-satisfaction (CS/D) with Long-haul Inclusive Tours'.

1.1 Personal, academic, practical management rationale

The *personal* motivation for the study was driven in the first instance by the researcher's practical experience of long-haul inclusive tours both as a consumer and also as a tour leader of walking expeditions on Mt. Kenya. By the early 1990s the importance of *long-haul tourism* was firmly established and indeed the researcher intuitively felt that it was poised for growth. Although the future of inclusive tours was not so certain at that time - indeed there have continued to be some doubters particularly with reference to the short-haul market - such doubts were not held by the researcher. Moreover, the reality of events throughout the research period has been that the market for inclusive long-haul tours has become enlarged and diversified with a greater number of niche operators and a parallel interest and growth among mass market operators in a range of destinations. Therefore, although there was a personal motivation behind the research focus on long-haul inclusive tours such a sub-sector of the tourism industry has had both initial and sustained industry relevance throughout the research period.

At the same time, the topic of *consumer satisfaction* whether within services in general or tourism in particular has also sustained its relevance - satisfaction was a common buzzword at the start of the research and its continued and frequent mention in both tourism industry and academic publications and pronouncements has shown few signs of abating. Such a concern has stemmed from the business orthodoxy that satisfaction encourages repeat purchase and thus encourages greater profitability.

The touchpaper that further fuelled the initial *academic* interest in satisfaction was Bitner et al (1990) which teased open some of the established literature and journal sources on what turned out to be just one specific antecedent of satisfaction (attribution), suggested emergent themes and also concerned itself with a tourism example. From such work the researcher started to form an interest in other *supposed antecedents* - expectation, performance, disconfirmation, attribution, emotion and equity. Also of crucial importance at this early stage was the work of Van Raaij and

Francken (1984), and their development of a tourism specific model of consumer behaviour throughout a 'vacation sequence' - a period of vacation time from initial consumer search through to post experience overview. It was noted that the framework provided by an inclusive tour would delimit the boundaries of a research study in *temporal space*. The researcher soon realised that there were only a limited number of academic articles that sought to analyse CS/D, or any aspect of CS/D, during any stage of the vacation sequence other than towards the end or after the end of a vacation. Additionally, practical experience also informed the researcher that tour operator management sought primarily to analyse CS/D towards the end or after the end of a vacation. Intuitively, it seemed that there was a genuine rift in understanding of CS/D and its formation from such a limited conception.

Early on in the research, too, the *grand models* of consumer behaviour were also useful. These models placed CS/D within a consumer behaviour framework (Howard and Sheth (1969); Engel, Kollat, Blackwell (1969); Nicosia (1966)). Other tourism specific models such as Moutinho (1989) served the same purpose. However, due acknowledgement was made to the basic, well recognised shortcomings of all these models 'which rely on a correspondence of belief rather than any logical proof that they are right or wrong' (Gilbert (1991 : 92)).

Such academic sources provided the catalyst for much of the subsequent reading prior to the development of the research questions. However, throughout the research there was also a firm intention to enhance the study by maintaining its essential relevance at a *practical management* level as well as at an *academic* level. The research straddled aspects from each of the five 'research categories' in tourism management suggested by Brent Ritchie (1994 :15) - policy research, evaluation research, managerial research, action research and operational research - perhaps with an emphasis on policy research and managerial research (see 4.0.10). On the one hand, the intention that emerged was to research a *general* situation with a *broad* strategic viewpoint - consumer behaviour with regard to CS/D in long-haul tourism - an intention most akin to 'policy research'. On the other hand, the further intention was to research a *specific* situation - a particular case study of consumer behaviour with regard to CS/D in long-haul tourism - an intention most akin to 'managerial research'. One approach informed the other. The practical management perspective is infused and highlighted in the text at appropriate points with the academic perspective.

So, it appeared that there was a real academic and practical rationale for the exploration of CS/D on long-haul inclusive tours. Specifically, the initial literature

search and experience as a tour leader and consumer suggested that this exploration might focus on the supposed *antecedents* of consumer satisfaction and dis-satisfaction, a consideration of their independence or interdependence and their *development through time* over the vacation sequence represented by the long-haul inclusive tour. Furthermore, it was considered that an extra dimension would be added by a concentration on CS/D as viewed by a triangle of players - the consumers, consumer service personnel and management. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (PSB) (1985, 1988) had shown the usefulness of considering a variety of viewpoints in their research on quality gaps - although the researcher drew a clear distinction between the two concepts of quality and satisfaction and never made an attempt to follow the methodology of PSB in the satisfaction field as opposed to the quality field. The three viewpoints were additionally considered to complement one another from a methodological standpoint as they could act as a check on the authenticity of the various perspectives.

1.2 Research problem

The central research problem was delineated by reference to one primary or catch-all question and a number of secondary or specific questions:

Primary / catch all

- How and why do tourism consumers, consumer service personnel and management vary concerning their observed or expressed thoughts, feelings and actions with regard to consumer satisfaction in relation to a long-haul inclusive tour?

Secondary / specific

- How do the generically recognised antecedents of satisfaction function and relate for tourism consumers / consumer service personnel / management with regard to consumer satisfaction in relation to a long-haul inclusive tour?
- How and why do tourism consumers / consumer service personnel / management consider that consumer satisfaction varies through time in relation to a long-haul inclusive tour?

Whilst other elements of the research plan were progressively altered or modified with time these questions remained largely unchanged throughout the research period - even if they became more focussed. In broad terms the researcher knew what the research was about from an early stage.

From these questions it may be seen that the central thrust of the research problem is the understanding of the *process* of CS/D as applied to long-haul tourism on inclusive tours. The consideration of each of these essential components of the problem seemed to be *important*. They were thought to make a valuable contribution to the knowledge of academics and practitioners. In combination, too, the components of the research problem were deemed to be *original* in scope. Accordingly, the research appeared to meet the criteria of '*relevance*' - one of the key criteria that Hammersley (1992 : 72-77) recognised in order to judge research.

Furthermore, much of the later primary and secondary research allied to existing practical knowledge only served to support an initial assertion that the study might have a wider application beyond long-haul, inclusive tours. Such tours might well be viewed as a microcosm of tourism in general - although despite the attractiveness of such support the researcher was aware that such an expansive claim fell within the realm of interpretation and was not beyond reasonable doubt.

Rubin and Rubin (1995 : 52) succinctly stressed the need for a topic to be important: 'You don't want to get done with your research and then find out that no one is interested in what you found out but yourself. As part of doing a design, you should ask yourself, why is this topic important? To whom would it be important? How could the results be used? What are the broader concerns of which this research is a part?' Each of these questions could reasonably be answered positively in regard to the research problem that was posed.

1.3 Structure and linkage

The research questions were investigated by a variety of methods - secondary research anchored by a management core but from a range of disciplines in the social sciences ; and primary research involving management interviews and case study participant observation and consumer interviews.

The *literature review* in *chapter 2* appears to establish some clear antecedents of CS/D - expectations, performance, disconfirmation, attribution, equity and emotion - despite

reservations about some of the research methods that generated the antecedents. For the most part these methods seemed to be both rather artificial and contrived and also rather too concentrated on *post performance* evaluation. Some of the antecedents had been extensively studied and were rather well-worn whilst others were rather more new and relatively pristine. It was by no means certain that the primary research would recognise the same set of antecedents of CS/D identified in the secondary literature.

Furthermore, although the literature search revealed various attempts to argue the importance of one antecedent vis-a-vis another in relation to CS/D - and although consumer behaviour research in general has been replete with decision making models - there appeared to be no detailed study which considered the interaction of the supposed antecedents of CS/D *through time in the field on a specific extended tourism service experience*.

The supposed antecedents had in many cases not been applied to a service industry context and had even more rarely been applied to the context of the tourism industry, inclusive tours or long-haul inclusive tours. Some detail and some nascent analysis on the role of these *contexts* in the formation of CS/D - prior to primary research - is provided in *chapter 3*. An attempt is also made in this chapter to position CS/D within the framework of other potential consumer judgements - quality, price and value.

The *methodology* is detailed in *chapter 4*. It reveals and emphasises the flexible development of the research design through time in response to ongoing primary and secondary research. Such flexibility was essential because each successive stage of the research informed the next. Accordingly, whilst at the outset of the research it was considered that the consumer perspective of CS/D might be best delineated through the use of consumer service questionnaires (CSQs) it became obvious during exploratory management interviews that such an approach was flawed and that an alternative technique needed to be employed in order to generate a rich and detailed response to the research questions. This pattern was repeated in other instances.

Following the initial literature search the first phase of *primary research* consisted of an elementary convenience *postal questionnaire* to tour operator management in order to help gauge the feasibility of the research. A short although informative series of *exploratory management interviews* resensitised the researcher with the terminology of tour operator management, established contacts and emphasised the need to search for an alternative to CSQs.

Extended management interviews with senior management or directors of 13 long-haul tour operators probed for the management perspective of CS/D. These interviews were open and non-directive although based around the framework of a cover schedule that focussed on the overall research questions. They provided the first apex of the three sided perspective on CS/D sought in the research. A *description and analysis* of the findings from these *interviews* is contained in *chapter 5*. Just as one example, whilst expectations were emphasised by management in the formation of consumer satisfaction an analysis suggested that this emphasis reflected a management desire for control - rather than a real understanding of consumers. Further themes emerged, too, with regard to the other antecedents of satisfaction and the management perception on the development of CS/D through time.

The details and initial analysis of the management interviews were carried forward in to the *case study participant observation*. This was carried out after all the management interviews were completed - a temporal sequence reflected in the arrangement of the research chapters. Essentially, the participant observation rests at the methodological *core* of this research. It was employed as a technique after a close examination of current academic practice and practical management practice with regard to the supposed measurement and analysis of CS/D. Furthermore the narrative generated from the participant observation also constitutes a central set of primary research findings which are most coherently described and analysed in situ and not devoid of the rich understanding that is generated from context. Moreover, the chronological sequence of the narrative is central to the research question that seeks to analyse the development of CS/D through time. A reading of the narrative - *chapter 6* - clearly reveals this development.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggested that illustrative materials are meant to give a sense of reality. However, the analysis that is presented alongside the narrative adds some detached conceptualisation to the reality - a theoretical commentary with varying degrees of abstraction. Such is the principle that underlies the description and analysis of chapter 6 - and fundamentally contributes to its *central* and not ancillary place in the main body of the research text.

The *interpretation* in *chapter 7* draws together each component of the research - the context of the research study of CS/D within services management, tourism management, tour operation, long-haul inclusive tours, the tour destination, and the other consumer judgements (apart from CS/D judgements) of quality, price and value; the secondary research on the antecedents of CS/D and CS/D through time; the

primary interviews with management; the participant observation and the post tour consumer interviews. The interpretation is rooted in the *accumulated* information and concepts but moves beyond description and analysis.

Perhaps it is possible to use the touristic analogy of a trekker's map with attached symbols and scale. This allows the map reader to progress from one place to another place but in the correct hands may be used to *analyse* the landscape - in this analogy the landscape of CS/D. However, just one or two maps with one or two scales and one or two sets of symbols may be insufficient to truly *interpret* the landscape. Rather more maps from the micro scale to the macro scale may be required - together with field research. It is the purpose of chapter 7 to provide such *interpretation*, move beyond *description* and *analysis*, and provide a synthesis of the contribution of each primary and secondary source to the resolution of the research questions. In particular, the participant observation case study crystallised the concept of a CS/D antecedent vortex that captures the dynamic inter-relationships between the CS/D antecedents. These antecedents are filtered through both a specific context and a more broad and general context which then leads to the development of within tour CS/D among the consumers. Such CS/D precedes consumer and/or tour leader or other consumer service personnel action (or inaction) that responds (or does not respond) to the CS/D. Action or inaction leads to a positive or negative modification or stultification of CS/D. Through time consumers become more certain of their evaluation of CS/D.

Finally, *chapter 8* provides a final overview and restatement of the research contribution to academic and practical knowledge and understanding regarding the antecedents of CS/D and the process of CS/D formation through time in long-haul tour operation. Additionally, it suggests that the method of participant observation has the potential to make a significant contribution to both the practical world of tour operator management and academic study.

Chapter 1 Introduction	Chapter 2 CS/D - Antecedents and antecedent temporal process <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Overview◆ Expectancy disconfirmation◆ Attribution◆ Emotion◆ Equity◆ Interim word
---------------------------	---

Chapter 3 Context	Chapter 4 Methodology	Chapter 5 Management interviews	Chapter 6 Participant observation	Chapter 7 Interpretation	Chapter 8 Final overview
----------------------	--------------------------	------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

Chapter 2: CS/D - antecedents and temporal process

2.0 Overview

CS/D has been viewed as a process and has appeared in the literature to be influenced independently or in combination by a range of antecedents. There are a number of distinguishable research streams within a considerable literature that describes the process of CS/D:

- *expectancy disconfirmation - concerned with the three elements of expectation, performance and disconfirmation*
- *attribution theory*
- *emotion theory*
- *equity theory.*

These antecedents appeared to form the foundation of any proposed work on CS/D and CS/D through time and, therefore, were firmly placed at the core of the literature search.

2.1 Expectancy Disconfirmation

2.1.1 Standards, appraisal and comparison

2.1.2 Core psychological theory

2.1.3 Criticism of Expectancy Disconfirmation - Experience

2.1.4 Further criticism of expectancy disconfirmation

*A joint consideration of expectation, performance and disconfirmation (expectancy disconfirmation) is followed in the initial stage of this theory review. Overlap between the three antecedents within the academic and trade literature is commonplace in an appraisal of satisfaction. Primary interviews with management from long-haul tour operation showed that they, too, often interconnected the three antecedents. It was thought that an attempt at a *separate* consideration of each antecedent - at least *here* in the first instance - could encourage confusion and repetition rather than clarity and brevity.*

At the same time the researcher became keenly aware from the literature of the potential for the separate influence of each of these antecedents. This sentiment was also expressed during the management interviews in the primary research and, indeed, the three components of expectancy disconfirmation will be treated separately within

the description and analysis of the management interviews (ch. 5). Furthermore, the narrative of the participant observation element of the research (ch.6) will highlight comments and observations on expectation, performance and disconfirmation as seemingly independent antecedents as well as their joint consideration as expectancy disconfirmation. Accordingly, whilst this chapter cautiously *starts* with the established joint consideration of the expectation, performance and disconfirmation antecedents the *criticisms* of such an approach are also exposed.

Throughout, in the spirit of inseparable description and analysis, annotations have been added which are thought to be relevant to the tourism industry in general and long-haul tourism in particular.

For future reference the interpretation chapter in this research will also emphasise both independent *and* interdependent antecedents.

2.1.1 Standards, appraisal and comparison.

The study of expectancy disconfirmation has been bound up with the establishment of *standards* and has involved elements of *appraisal* and *comparison*.

Miller (1977) actually defined four types of expectation comparison standards - '*ideal*' ('can be'), '*lowest tolerable level*' ('must be'), '*deserved*' ('should be') and '*expected*' ('will be'). It was suggested that the latter was most realistic - '*ideal*' and '*lowest tolerable standards*' were dismissed and '*expected*' standards were favoured vis-a-vis '*deserved*' standards because the marketplace was supposed to respond to the realities of demand rather than considerations of equity, personal values, cultural norms, socio-economic and political philosophy and the quality of life. These comparison standards corresponded with standards suggested by Swan and Trawick (1980). A wider set of standards largely related to experience also emerged in the literature in due course (see 2.1.3).

With regard to *appraisal* and *comparison* the research in consumer behaviour and a comparison of consumer expectations with outcomes goes back to Thibaut and Kelley (1959) and Kelley and Thibaut (1978) and their study of the social psychology of groups. These articles were formative in later understandings and mis-understandings connected with expectations. Kelley and Thibaut, complemented by Helson (1964), explained the role of satisfaction through a framework that mediated pre-consumption and post-consumption cognitions. They predicted that satisfaction develops from the

interaction among individuals and the discrepancy between *outcomes* and *evaluation standards*. Kelley and Thibaut (1978 : 8-9) summarised their framework in an overview:

'The outcomes for any participant in an ongoing interaction can be stated in terms of the rewards received and the costs incurred by the participant.... By rewards we refer to whatever gives pleasure and gratification to the person. Costs refer to factors that inhibit or deter the performance of any behaviour.... Two kinds of standard for making an evaluation have been identified - the comparison level (CL) and the comparison level for alternatives (CL_{alt}). CL is the standard that reflects the quality of outcomes that the participant feels he or she deserves. Outcomes falling above CL are experienced as relatively satisfying and those below CL are unsatisfactory. The location of CL on the person's scale of outcomes is determined by all the outcomes known to the member, either by direct experience or by observation of others.... The CL_{alt} can be defined as the lowest level of outcomes a member will accept in the light of available alternative opportunities in other relationships.'

Although the specific intention of Thibaut and Kelley (1959) and Kelley and Thibaut (1978) was to provide a conceptual framework relating to the social psychology of groups it is not difficult to understand how their work has assumed an important role in studies of consumer behavior that relate to satisfaction. In an early review La Tour and Peat (1979 : 434) commented that:

'Thibaut and Kelley's theory is particularly appealing because it explicitly recognises that satisfaction is not an absolute phenomenon but rather a relative one. (Although the disconfirmation of expectations model also assumes that satisfaction results from a relative comparison of obtained attributes to expected attributes ... the model is too restricted to account fully for consumer satisfaction).'

Indeed, given the nature of tourism as a people business and a business in which interdependence within a group is often of the utmost consequence - which will be borne out in the primary research - it is perhaps particularly informative to focus on the Thibaut and Kelley framework as one potential guide/paradigm for discussion.

Helson (1964 : 62) in a follow-up to Thibaut and Kelley (1959), defined the meaning of the term '*adaptation level*' for the behavioural scientist as '... a weighted mean of all stimuli, present and past, affecting behaviour' - a concept of environmental adaptation long used by biologists and psychologists. This adaptation level (or anchor) sustained subsequent evaluation. Expectations about performance could be viewed as an adaptation level - the *baseline* around which the consumer made disconfirmation judgements. Oliver (1980 : 461) essentially applied Helson's 'adaptation-level' theory to consumer satisfaction and Oliver firmly linked up *expectations* and *adaptation levels*:

'Expectations are influenced by the same factors that Helson suggested in his discussions of adaptation phenomenon, namely (1) the product itself including one's prior experience, brand connotations, and symbolic elements (2) the context including the content of communications from salespeople and social referents (3) individual characteristics including persuasibility and perceptual distortions.' Of course, it is worthy of comment that a triangle of influences were represented in his suggestions - a management influence(1) an employee influence(2) and a consumer influence(3). This happens to be the threefold set of influences considered in this present research.

Outcomes that are poorer than expected (*a negative disconfirmation*) are rated below a reference point, whereas those better than expected (*a positive disconfirmation*) are evaluated above a given point. Expectations are confirmed when a product performs as expected - that is when the adaptation level is maintained. Accordingly, *satisfaction* is seen as the combination of *expectation*, *performance*, and *disconfirmation* - and dissatisfaction results when a subject's expectations are negatively disconfirmed.

In a full and succinct outline of the expectancy disconfirmation model Oliver (1989 : 2) summarised the earlier views (1977 , 1980):

'... consumers are posited to hold pre-consumption normative standards or to form expectancies, observe product (attribute) performance, compare product with their norms and/or expectations, form disconfirmation perceptions, combine these perceptions with expectation levels, and form satisfaction judgements.'

As Churchill and Surprenant (1982 : 492) summarised:

'The full disconfirmation paradigm encompasses four constructs: expectations, performance, disconfirmation, and satisfaction.'

Later other constructs were to be added to this paradigm.

2.1.2 Core psychological theory.

In early research which generally supported the overall expectancy disconfirmation paradigm expectations were often manipulated within the tradition of experimental psychology. These studies, which are usefully considered in close relation to one another, typically involved the provision of specific information to experimental groups.

This research often dealt with simple *products* - both Anderson (1973) and Cardoso (1965), for example, used ballpoint pens in their experiments - and, of course, this is a potential limitation. *Essentially, however, their relevance derives from a rationale that apparently tangential studies are often extremely relevant because they expose critical manipulations and discussions that inform an analysis of more complex products and services - such as tourism.* Indeed, Helson (1964 :14) stated that:

'There is no reason why knowledge gained from laboratory experiments is precluded from aiding in understanding facts of everyday behaviour. If pure research does not enable us to understand classes of phenomena other than the ones investigated, it is not because the research is 'pure' but because it is too narrowly based and interpreted.'

Anderson (1973) reviewed and tested four psychological theories that have a place in this discussion:

'*cognitive dissonance*' or '*assimilation theory*'

'*contrast theory*'

'*generalised negativity theory*'

'*assimilation-contrast theory*'.

These are supposed to predict the effect on product evaluation and consumer satisfaction of the disparity between expectations and product performance.

Cognitive dissonance

It was Festinger (1962 : 260) who first proposed the theory of *cognitive dissonance* which he believed to be an inevitable consequence of decision making:

'The basic background of the theory consists of the notion that the human organism tries to establish internal harmony, consistency, or congruity among his opinions, attitudes, knowledge, and values.

That is, there is a drive toward consonance among cognitions.'

He hypothesised that the magnitude of the post-decision dissonance depended on the importance of the decision; the relative attractiveness of the unchosen alternative to the chosen one; and the degree of overlap of cognitive elements corresponding to the alternatives. Festinger continued (1962 : 47)

'Once dissonance exists following a decision, the pressure to reduce it will manifest itself in attempts to increase the relative attractiveness of the chosen alternative, to decrease the relative attractiveness of the unchosen alternative, to establish cognitive overlap, or possibly to revoke the decision psychologically'.

Intuitively, prior to primary research, it was not difficult to relate these fundamental tenets of Festinger's theory to consumer behaviour in tourism. It was presumed that there was a long time-lag between purchase and consumption of the tourism product and that this would encourage the operation of the various pressures suggested by Festinger - it seemed relevant to suggest, indeed, that the consumer might even attempt to go beyond merely revoking a decision *psychologically*. Also there was interest in the extent to which the unchosen alternatives were actually considered during the tour.

Further application of cognitive dissonance to the study of expectation and performance suggested that customers would attempt to make less dissonant a difference between *expectations* and *product performance*. Oliver (1977) considered that disconfirmation was believed to be psychologically uncomfortable. Prior to the primary research, the researcher conceived of an inclusive tour which was supposed to be good but turned out to be below expectation - perhaps, say, because the tour operator representatives were not available as frequently as expected. The consumer might then self-convince that the tour did not depend on the representatives as much as might be thought and that other sources of help such as local people were just as useful as good tour representatives.

Contrast theory

Contrast theory, the second of the psychological theories mentioned above, suggested that the consumer magnified the difference between the product received and the product expected. In the conceived example above of the tour representatives the consumer might argue vehemently that the representatives were never available and that the whole tour was ruined as a result.

It would seem from these examples that contrast theory was the opposite of cognitive dissonance / assimilation theory.

Generalised negativity

The third theory, *generalised negativity*, suggested that *any* disconfirmation of an expected result would be perceived as less pleasant or less satisfying than if the expectation / expectancy had been confirmed. This hypothesis was tested and confirmed by Carlsmith and Aronson (1963), albeit with reference to products far removed from the tourism experience. Whilst there is much inference in academic

journals, trade publications and trade marketing literature that expectations should be consistent with product performance it is also inferred that product performance may exceed expectations. This suggestion runs contrary to the theory of generalised negativity.

Assimilation contrast

Finally, Hovland, Harvey and Sherif (1957) suggested that cognitive dissonance and contrast theory might be reconciled. Contrary to Anderson's (1973) review Hovland, Harvey and Sherif did not consider expectations and performance per se - their experiment considered assimilation and contrast effects in reactions to communication about a controversial social issue. However, they found that if there was a large difference between an individual's stand on an issue and the position held in a communication it was contrast theory which became dominant. On the other hand, if the difference was slight then the assimilation theory became dominant. The so called *assimilation-contrast theory* assumed, therefore, that consumers had ranges or latitudes of acceptance, rejection and neutrality. Such work appears to be a logical extension of the other preceding theories.

A seminal article from Cardoso (1965) dealt with some of the apparent contradictions between dissonance theory and contrast theory in order to devise a relationship between not just expectation and evaluation but expectation, evaluation and *effort*. The expectation and effort involved in the simulated purchase of ballpoint pens by college juniors were manipulated by the researchers. Clearly, there is once again only a tenuous link between the details of this experiment and a real tourism experience - tour products are frequently chosen from catalogues (brochures) as were the ballpoint pens in the experiment. However, Cardoso suggested that when a customer expends considerable effort - physical, mental and financial - dissonance theory applies. When little effort is expended contrast theory applies. Effort invested may, therefore, contribute to the evaluation of the product. Long-haul tourism was presumed to involve each of the three types of effort and so assuming the correctness of this presumption and the application of Cardoso's suggestion it was thought that dissonance theory might dominate.

So within this framework consumer satisfaction depended not only on the product itself but also on other influences that surrounded the acquisition of the product. As such consumer satisfaction represented more a global concept than just a measurement

of expectation, performance and disconfirmation - whether dealt with separately or in tandem.

2.1.3 Criticism of Expectancy Disconfirmation - Experience

Criticism of expectancy disconfirmation has already become apparent. It extends further. In particular, the role of *experience* is not stressed in its fullest sense. Accordingly, it is necessary to consider theory that relates to whether a wider *set* of brand and product experiences are considered by consumers in the evaluation of satisfaction than the *immediate* focal brand, the brand actually purchased and used - the limit of the experience based expectation that is set in much traditional research on CS/D. Expectations may be based on *multiple standards* rather than *single standards*.

Also *memories* of experiences need to be considered - it has been suggested that memories may emerge *during* the performance stage of consumption which were not a part of prior expectations because they were not remembered during the supposed period of expectation formation.

Moreover, a wider consideration of the learning experience would consider the *biases* that may be introduced alongside experience.

Additionally, it is necessary to take into account the relationship that may exist between direct experience and/or indirect experience (word of mouth communication) and specific *management generated communication* via marketing programmes.

Finally, it is imperative to remember that the use here of the term experience relates to past experience - and not present experience (performance).

Brands as comparison standards

Woodruff, Cadotte and Jenkins (1983), summarised a general thread in some of the literature that cast doubt on whether existent satisfaction research was too dependent on expectation-based disconfirmation that related *solely* to the expectations held of one brand and the subsequent performance that surrounded its use. They suggested that standards in the form of norms could also have a role and consequently extended the confirmation/disconfirmation baseline beyond experience with the focal brand. Expectations could be based on a wide breadth of experience - on the *focal brand*; on *brand-based norms*, when one brand dominated a consumer's set of brand experiences

and the focal brand was not the reference brand (common in variety seeking experience or when a brand was not available); and on *product-based norms*, when a consumer had experience with several brands of a product type within a product class (eg a whole range of long-haul brands) but no one brand stood out as a reference brand. Consumers could build up expectations from a brand unit (eg. a particular long-haul package), other units of the same brand (eg. several tour packages with the same company), other similar brands (eg. a long-haul package with another company), a set of brands competing for the same use situation (eg. other packages in general) and other product types competing for the same need or want (eg all potential tourism experiences). Each could be a possible standard for the confirmation / disconfirmation comparison so that *different standards* could be used by *different people* even in the same or similar use situation and the same person could use different standards in different use situations.

Prior to the participant observation, it would have been argued along with Voase (1995) that it was difficult to brand many mass market *short-haul* tour operator products (yet alone *long-haul* products) and that the tour operating industry was too young for individual companies to have established authentic brand images.

Furthermore, it emerged that management had not specifically identified a growth in multiple use among long-haul consumers - apart from in a few exceptions.

Accordingly, there was no particular suggestion that the long-haul consumer might be considering the range of brand-based and product-based comparisons as outlined by Woodruff, Cadotte, and Jenkins (1983). This, however, was untrue (see 6.2.2).

Memories

The theme of past experience was developed by Mazursky (1989) in a specific tourism context (tourists visiting a stalactite cave). Mazursky related back to the explicit views of Woodruff, Cadotte, and Jenkins (1983) and also the inferred views of Francken and Van Raaij (1979) and Van Raaij and Francken (1984) in their overview of the vacation sequence. Accordingly, an *extended paradigm* was produced which was less closed and independent and nested within a broader structure than the traditional paradigm (expectation-performance-disconfirmation-satisfaction). This took into account consumer norms and the extent and nature of past experience with other events that satisfied the same needs. Mazursky (1989), therefore, suggested in a discussion, not delineated in terms of brand and product based norms, that whilst a consumer's expectations (actually Mazursky used the word 'predictions') of performance may be

superficial and vague the actual performance can cause a retrieval of *memories* from past experiences and norms. These memories then function as comparison baselines.

On an intuitive level, prior to primary research, it was thought that Mazursky's extended paradigm appeared to be more closely tied to reality than the traditional paradigm even given the addendum of Hoch and Deighton (1989) among others that learning through experience was prone to error.

Such a view on the retrieval of memories may be seen to have some relation with Oliver's (1981) definition of satisfaction as the 'evaluation of the surprise inherent in a product acquisition and/or consumption experience' and Botterill's (1987) remarks on *unpredictability* as the key to satisfactory tourism experiences (see 2.1.4). A consumption experience draws out memories that may not have been considered prior to consumption and are, therefore, based on a wider evaluative base than expectation and immediate performance. Memories may extend across the range of experience with the focal brand, brand-based norms, product-based norms *and beyond*.

'*Beyond*' may be far beyond - at least as conjured up from Francken and van Raaij (1981) based on Olander (1977). In their work, on general leisure-time activity, they suggested that the standard against which satisfaction was judged might be broader than an individual's expectation as derived from earlier experiences (temporal expectation). It could also encompass the individual's achievements in other spheres of life (spatial expectation) and the perceived level of satisfaction others derived from the activity (social expectation). On the other hand, however, Oliver (1980b :2) counselled against too broad an equation of job, life and consumer satisfaction:

'...it must be remembered that the typical product purchase differs in many respects from the acceptance of one's life, the selection or acceptance of a job.... All these represent long-term commitments where the standards for comparison and the perceived deficits arise from non-market forces... Our concern is with the consumer's more immediate response to a market offering...'

Bias and learning

Hoch and Deighton (1989) cast some doubt on the efficacy of the process by which consumers learned from experience. Russell (1948: 59) called this 'learning from acquaintance' rather than 'learning from description' of which advertising was supposed to be the principal tool. Hoch and Deighton (1989 : 1) considered that consumers created *bias* in their interpretation of the experience:

'Learning from self-generated experience with a product or service is not a simple process of discovering objective truth. It is, to a greater or lesser extent, open to influence and the consumer's confidence in the objectivity of such learning can be illusory.'

Nevertheless Hoch and Deighton (1989 : 16) also stated in their conclusion:

'The credibility of self-directed learning... deriving from the consumer's sense of control of the process and the vividness of personally controlled experiences, makes it a powerful tool....'

Perceived reality is what counts.

Brehmer (1980) strongly argued that truth was not readily apparent. Learning problems occurred both when based on passive observation and on action - passive observation created the well documented problems of induction. Furthermore, although the behaviour of people might well change after experience this did not mean that people had acquired more valid knowledge - although, on the other hand, it might be commented that even invalid knowledge may be a base for future purchase decisions.

Brehmer continued that action was necessarily linked to selection. Doing one thing precluded doing another and so the problem of learning from experience when it required action based on judgement was that it was not possible to make a true evaluation of the initial action. In a review, therefore, Brehmer (1980: 223) concluded that:

'... people have a number of biases which prevent them from using the information that experience provides. Examples of such biases are the tendency to use confirmatory evidence, assumptions about causality, and disregard of negative information.'

Einhorn and Hogarth (1978) suggested both similar and additional reasons behind the difficulty of learning from experience - the tendency neither to search for nor to use disconfirmatory evidence; the lack of awareness of the environmental characteristics in which behaviour occurs; and the use of unaided memory for coding, storing and retrieving information. The foundation of Einhorn and Hogarth's study related to research in psychology among clinicians. Their own research subjects were graduate statisticians. These subjects were obviously far removed from the normal range of tourism consumers. However, the suggestions of Einhorn and Hogarth were worth deliberation. It seemed logical to assume that tourists were just as likely to find it difficult to learn from experience as trained statisticians. Furthermore, they were just as likely to believe that their intuitive judgements were infallible. Einhorn and Hogarth stated that both experts and non experts found it difficult to learn from experience and

yet paradoxically placed great confidence in their judgement. In the terms of Langer (1975 :311), in a not unrelated experimental context, there was an '*illusion of control*'. In line with this Hoch and Ha (1986) believed that active hypothesis testing during product evaluation could induce feelings of control and increase consumer confidence.

Other experimental work by Lord, Ross and Lepper (1979 : 2108) could also be interpreted as a far reaching argument against the influence of extended experience - such experience appeared to have no impact on initial beliefs. Summarising a range of their publications they concluded that:

'... once formed, impressions about the self... beliefs about other people... or theories about functional relationships between variables... can survive the total discrediting of the evidence that first gave rise to such beliefs. In essence... beliefs can survive the complete subtraction of the critical formative evidence on which they were initially based... the mere availability of contradictory evidence rarely seems sufficient to cause us to abandon our prior beliefs or theories.'

So there might not be one routeway - favoured by academics and management - between experience and learning. Experience could provide an illusion of control, mistaken learning or no learning at all. However, each of these could affect behaviour - whether justified or not.

Learning

In a more bullish fashion, Hoch and Deighton (1989) partitioned the problem of *learning from experience* into a four stage model: hypothesising - exposure - encoding - integration. By means of illustration, in a long-haul tourism context, it was thought prior to the primary research that consumers would *hypothesise* about, say, the activity content of a given tour and would either accept a company agenda and not engage in extensive search or, alternatively, search purposefully for diagnostic information (although this in itself might involve a self-inflicted search bias); would be *exposed* to evidence on tour activities either in a passive manner, almost as a distant observer, with no attempt to influence the decision making environment (accepting the programme and decisions of tour representatives) or in a more active manner - involved in the decision making and, therefore, responsible for decisions; would *encode* the activity experience, that is, select evidence and attach meaning to it based on prior knowledge and expectations and wider memories; and, finally, would *integrate* and update beliefs on the activities in the long-haul experience.

Hoch and Deighton also specified three factors that moderated the learning opportunities and created particular learning frameworks: *familiarity with the domain, ambiguity of the learning environment, and motivation to learn*. These were conditioned on a fourth factor - *competitive status of the target brand*.

Each of the three learning frameworks recognised by Hoch and Deighton were envisioned prior to the participant observation. First, it was considered that consumer familiarity with long-haul tourism, although increasing, would be limited compared to short-haul tourism. In the terms of Hoch and Deighton this suggested that with such a low level of familiarity, prior beliefs would be few or weakly held and that the long-haul consumers would lack competing past hypotheses with which to organise complex experience. Learning from experience, although open to influence, would be slow.

Second, the ambiguous learning environment of long-haul tourism would mean that learning was vague and open to multiple interpretations. Again learning through experience would be slow.

Third, motivation to learn would be high as the consumption decisions would not be commonplace and the outcomes would be of some consequence. The highly motivated long-haul consumer would generate hypotheses, enter actively into the search for information and attempt to fully encode information.

With regard to target brand status, Hoch and Deighton had suggested that when a consumer wanted to learn the 'underdog' had more to gain than the 'topdog'. Given the suggestion that there was as yet no authentic brand image or clear topdog in long-haul tourism (see 2.1.3) and that there were a plethora of niche markets this element of the theory seemed less amenable to illustration.

In terms of satisfaction and the role of experience it seemed from an application of Hoch and Deighton's work that there were many opportunities for the reality of past experience to intrude on the complicated nature of the consumer learning process. Each stage of the learning framework was open to *managerial* influence. Consequently, according to Hoch and Deighton managers should not conclude that learning from experience was synonymous with lack of control over the content of learning. Rather they should be aware of the points at which they could exert leverage over the learning process - whether by facilitating, hindering or shaping what was learned.

Notwithstanding the doubts concerning the difficulty of learning from experience Mazursky (1989) pointed out how consumer beliefs about brands (and, presumably, wider experiences too) were derived from a variety of sources - not just personal use experience and word-of-mouth endorsements and criticisms but also the marketing efforts of companies. It is useful at this point to consider the links that exist between these sources.

Deighton (1984) argued that expectations formed via marketing, specifically the medium of advertising, were considered by consumers to be partisan and biased. Furthermore, consumers were only likely to accept such a partisan source of expectation after exposure to more objective information - such as product experience or 'evidence' recalled from memory.

Deighton (1984 : 763-764) suggested that contrary to the classical tradition of advertising research - in which the communicator and receiver were viewed as adversaries - the advertiser was more typically a *tempter* rather than an *adversary*. Brief acquaintance with much tourism advertising would confirm this suggestion. Moreover:

'... in most conspicuous contrast to the classical paradigm, the reception of advertising is often interwoven with experience.... While the classical persuader seeks only to change some pre-behavioural mental state, many advertisers have the opportunity to affect ex post facto interpretations of the consumption experience as much as expectations of what it will offer... (the classical) frameworks may yield misleading conclusions because they neglect one specific characteristic of advertising in natural settings: the opportunity to acquire and interpret *experiences* (db emphasis) from sources less partisan than the advertiser.'

With the increasing experience of contemporary tourists it seemed in advance of field-work that these ideas could have a particular application within the consumer behaviour of tourists engaged in long-haul travel.

Deighton's study found experimental support for interaction in the evaluation of advertising and evidence/experience. The research was based on automobiles but the evidence/experience was deliberately *ambiguous* (as is the case in tourism) and accordingly the research claims were limited to such ambiguous situations. Ambiguity was one of the learning frameworks suggested by Hoch and Deighton (1989) that moderated the learning experience - in an ambiguous environment there was less

opportunity for both choosing and interpreting evidence. Furthermore, Deighton (1984 : 767) saw the consumer as 'a naive and fallible investigator seeking a tolerable understanding of the markets in which he/she must deal.' *Both ambiguity and naivety were conceived to exist in the long-haul inclusive tour market - enhanced experience would not preclude the existence of lingering naivety and fallibility given the characteristics of such a service product.*

With reference to products in ambiguous environments Hoch and Ha (1986), in an extension of Deighton's work, suggested that even though consumers might not believe the claims of advertisers they did not require *very* convincing evidence in order to start believing what advertisers told them. Evidence/experience did not need to be particularly *diagnostic* although it ought not to contradict directly the advertised claims. Consumers were motivated to search for hypothesis consistent information - confirmatory bias - rather than inconsistent information (although where the evidence was less ambiguous the confirmatory bias might not be so strong). Additionally, consumers might not realise that they were operating in ambiguous, low diagnostic environments.

Lord, Ross and Lepper (1979) in earlier experimental research (on complex social issues rather than products as in the case of Hoch and Ha (1986)) also showed that in an ambiguous environment there would be information that was both congruent and incongruent with expectations but that information processing limitations would prevent full attention to all the details.

This seemed to suggest that in the terms of Bobrow and Norman's (1975) classification it was necessary to place an emphasis on 'top down' concept driven information processing - (guided by expectations and prior knowledge not gained from experience) - rather than data driven and 'bottom-up' processing in which perception was driven by the objective (physical) characteristics of the stimulus.

However, it was recognised that the contradictory considerations outlined here were perhaps more apparent than real. Lord, Ross and Lepper (1979) acknowledged a need among consumers for '*critical formative evidence*' and in a tourism context it was intuitively presumed prior to the participant observation that this could originate from direct experience with the focal brand, other brands and product types, as well as word of mouth experience *and* company information in the form of brochures and other promotion.

2.1.4 Further criticism of expectancy disconfirmation

Separateness vis-a-vis interconnection, tourism relevance

Botterill (1987) appeared to dismantle the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm with a simple note based on both research findings and personal experience as a tourist. In a longitudinal study with a small number of international tourists he found that tourist anticipations, or expectations, were often inadequate predictors of the events of a vacation. Furthermore, it was the *unpredictability* of tourism events that lay at the heart of the tourism experience. Highly satisfied tourists did not have to make a perfect prediction of a vacation. Satisfaction, according to this view, was not achieved by narrowing the gap between expectation and performance so that consumer expectations were totally fulfilled. Rather, satisfaction related to the successful adaptation of the tourist to unpredictable events. This suggestion favoured the role of *performance* - by the tourist. Despite some blithe advertising strap lines on the theme of 'expect the unexpected' it was thought that most tour operators would more readily emphasise predictable expectations over unpredictable expectations - this thinking certainly had a marked influence on the participant observation tour and the job perception of the tour leader (the tour operator representative).

Beyond this the experimental research of Churchill and Surprenant (1982) cautioned that differences might exist in the working of the traditional paradigm (expectation and disconfirmation) depending on the specific nature of the *product* - durable (a VCR in their experiment) or non-durable (a hybrid plant). For the non-durable good the results conformed to the traditional paradigm. By contrast, satisfaction with the durable good was determined *solely* by its performance. This finding was replicated by Tse and Wilton (1988) for CD players and Bolton and Drew (1991) for consumer telephone services. Oliver and DeSarbo (1988) in an experiment within another *service* - security transactions - also showed that a direct performance effect could operate in tandem with the disconfirmation effect. Apparently, as Bolton and Drew (1991) concluded performance influenced CS/D through two mechanisms - directly via consumer experience of good and bad performance and indirectly as an input to the disconfirmation paradigm. However, although it is possible to configure some service industry parallels the base of these studies is not overtly related to tourism services.

Oliver (1977: 480) suggested and then tested whether *disconfirmation* could be considered to be an *independent* variable:

'Although the results support earlier conclusions that level of expectation is related to postexposure judgements, it is also shown that the disconfirmation experience may have an independent and equally significant impact.'

The logic of the case was that expectation and disconfirmation were so temporally removed from each other that the initial expectations were forgotten.

Oliver also suggested that the experience of *product usage* affected the process of non retention of information. Furthermore, disconfirmation outside structured experiments did not involve objective mental calculations but rather *subjective feelings*. There was, therefore, no *invariable* relationship between the two constructs of expectation and disconfirmation. Additionally, *accuracy* and feeling were not necessarily convergent.

The results of Oliver's experiment confirmed his suggestions with the additional point that the role of *expectation* was *also* significant as a predictor of post-exposure affect and intention to buy. Although Oliver's tests were carried out on automobile products using university students in a quasi realistic shopping experience, it seemed that there might be a certain logicity and familiarity to his suggestions and findings when applied to the tourism experience of inclusive tours.

It seems, from the detail and analysis above, that there can be no absolute acceptance regarding the workings and relative strength of the components that constitute the traditional paradigm. This paradigm may hold for some consumers. However, it may just be that some other consumers are more influenced by disconfirmation, others are more influenced by expectations and yet others are more influenced by performance.

Nor also is there definitive evidence to confirm the true relevancy of much of the research to the service industry - yet alone tourism - although it has already been contended that the studies expose critical manipulations and discussions that inform the analysis of more complex products and services.

Methodology

For certain, too, it does not seem that there can absolute faith in the methodological strength of the core studies. For example, the methodology of early disconfirmation research with the exception of Anderson, was strongly criticised by Olson and Dover (1979) who claimed that fellow researchers had only a vague notion of what was meant by the term 'expectations'. Studies lacked 'a precise conceptual and operational definition of the expectation construct' so that the measure of expectations was

actually a broad, general, global evaluation that would be better defined as a measure of 'attitude'. Additionally, Olson and Dover were critical of the 'shotgun techniques' - written or verbal information - that were variously used in order to convey details about product attributes and thus to create product expectations (although they use verbal instructions in their own study); the lack of pre-trial expectation tests; the omission of interpretable control groups and the 'transparency of experimental purpose' - the 'consumers' were placed in an unreal situation.

Of course, some of these criticisms helped to confirm the eventual view of the researcher that satisfaction studies were best conducted in the field with consumers rather than in a laboratory. The key technique - participant observation - could hardly be described as a 'shotgun' technique and there was certainly no 'transparency of experimental purpose'.

Furthermore, there is no certainty that the study of satisfaction should start and finish with a discussion of a limited range of just *four* constructs contained within the expectation - disconfirmation paradigm. Oliver and DeSarbo (1988) considered attribution and equity in addition to the expectancy disconfirmation and performance processes and even suggested that other disciplines could yield potential new determinants of satisfaction.

So, perhaps there is no surprise for Oliver (1993) to concede that the whole process is certainly more complicated than originally proposed.

But this was not a reason for despair. A strength of this research was its determined consideration of a broad sweep of theories - an acknowledgement, sometimes sceptical, of the wide existing theory base. Fundamentally, its strength was also its focus on the reality and practical experience of a real context - principally via participant observation - rather than more artificial experiments and contexts.

2.2 Attribution.

2.2.1 Information.

2.2.2 Prior beliefs.

2.2.3 Motivations.

2.2.4 Locus, stability, control.

2.2.5 Consequence.

A second major research stream that analyses the process of CS/D is that of attribution theory. Oliver (1989 : 2) summarised the link with expectancy disconfirmation:

'Evidence now suggests that disconfirmation does not lead directly to satisfaction as suggested by the current versions of the expectancy disconfirmation model but, instead, results in a search for the cause of the disconfirmation... expectancy disconfirmation in consumption is an instigator of attribution processing that gives rise to specific attributions. The traditional expectancy disconfirmation model only recognises a direct link from disconfirmation to satisfaction which connotes a disconfirmation-driven satisfaction response. This does not address the possibility that different types of satisfaction may result from different attributions of similarly perceived disconfirmation levels.'

Attribution is concerned with all aspects of *perceived causal inference* and can be both *positive* and *negative* in nature. A core concept of Heider (1958) was that even though the accuracy of causal inferences might be suspect the inferences were nevertheless logical and analytical. As Folkes (1984) pointed out the perceived reasons for product failure (and presumably service failure) might differ from the true reasons even though consumers may feel confident about their inferences. Attribution deals with perceptions - in the same way as expectations, performance and disconfirmation also deal with perceptions.

Another parallel with expectancy disconfirmation is that attribution theory deals with the consequences as well as antecedents. Folkes (1984 : 398) put this interest succinctly:

'Given a certain attribution or explanation for product failure, what does the consumer do?'

A range of core concepts are central to attribution theory. These are detailed below and once again annotations have been added which are thought to be relevant to the tourism industry in general and long-haul tourism in particular.

2.2.1 Information

Kelley and Michela (1980) considered that there were three antecedents for causal inferences - information, prior beliefs and motivations.

With regard first to *information* they referred to a variety of conceptions which differed in relation to what was specified as relevant information, the types of resulting attributions, and the nature of the process linking information to attribution. For example, the notion of *salience* suggested that an effect was attributed to the cause that was most salient in the perceptual (eg visual) field at the time the effect was observed - thought by the researcher to have particular relevance in a high contact consumer-employee industry such as tourism; and the notion of *primacy* suggested that a person scanned and interpreted a sequence of information until an attribution was attained and then disregarded later information or assimilated it to earlier impressions - again a notion which was thought to have a strong relevance to consumer decisions in tourism in which there is a considerable amount of information available for assimilation.¹

Weiner (1980) also introduced the notion that individuals have preferred *informational cues* and that these are weighted most heavily in their judgements. An example in this context might be a preference, say, for some long-haul consumers to rely on word of mouth information rather than brochure information.

These notions were considered by the researcher to be accessible to the experience of the consumer. They did not involve merely academic manipulations and abstractions. Heider (1958) believed that it was valuable to understand an individual's common-sense explanation of the world and the notions above were indeed used in common attributional language - although it was never considered that exact notion types would be immediately, specifically and easily identifiable in the field. Rather it was thought

¹Other conceptions were also suggested by Kelley and Michela. The notion/principle of non-common effects the notion/principle of *noncommon effects* states that the intention of a voluntary act is most clearly evident when it has a small number of effects that are unique to it (that is, uncommon) - perhaps not so relevant in a tourism context except that it is the *perception* of the number of effects and not the actual number that is important; the notion of *covariation* suggests that the effect is attributed to that condition which is present when the effect is present and which is absent when the effect is absent - a notion that has an understandable although easily contradicted rationale; the notion of *similarity* in which the properties of the cause are assumed to be similar to the properties of the observed effect (eg the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction); the notions of spatial and temporal *contiguity* in which events distinguished as cause and effect are conceived as occurring in juxtaposed space and time frames.

that the fieldwork could initially set out to describe attributions which could later be considered for relevant inclusion within the existing or modified theoretical framework.

According to the review of Kelley and Michela (1980), academic research in attribution has systematically identified the components of common knowledge, delineated its total structure and determined its errors and limitations. However, the common knowledge exists even without the academic study and rigour. It was assumed that long-haul tourism decisions were of substantial significance and permitted some deliberation by the consumer both prior to purchase as well as post-purchase and during and after performance. Therefore, it seemed logical to suggest that a variety of the processes above which link information to attributions were relevant in the determination of tourism consumer attributions.

2.2.2 Prior beliefs

Theory suggested that *prior beliefs* were a second antecedent of causal inferences. It has been argued that many attributional problems in tourism do not rely solely on new information but are accompanied by prior beliefs. These beliefs interpret events.

Weiner (1980 : 329) outlined this point with reference to memories which inform beliefs and which were dealt with in parallel context in the discussion of expectancy theory:

'To reach causal inferences, that is, to decide why one succeeds or fails, requires that various sources of information be utilised and combined. Some of this evidence will originate from the current situation, while other evidence is gleaned from memories of past events.'

Antecedent memories, which may act in conjunction with the present, were divided by Weiner into four categories - *ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck*. Each of these was influenced by its own set of *causal schemata, specific cues*, favoured *predisposition* from individuals and so on.

A causal schemata is a relatively permanent structure that refers to the beliefs a person holds about the relationship between an observed event (an effect) and the perceived causes of that event. Kelley (1967) outlined how people develop schema whereby cause and effect patterns are learned. Inferences may then be made quickly. Weiner (1980 : 341) recorded that:

'Two distinct schemata have been identified: multiple sufficient schemata and multiple necessary schemata. Multiple sufficient schemata are employed to account for common events, while unusual or extreme events elicit multiple necessary schemata to explain their occurrence.'

Linking the various conceptions it was thought possible to infer that a successful long-haul tourism experience would be likely to use the second scheme - it would be classified and remembered as a success, an unusual event that was thought to require high ability, effort, task difficulty and luck. A belief would be engendered that future success required and could be attributed to a similar combination of elements. The reverse would hold for unsuccessful experience.

2.2.3 Motivations

Theory also suggested that the search for explanation and so attribution might be further complicated by the consumer's *motivations* - the third antecedent of causal attribution.

Consumers might be motivated to supply rather *unobjective attributions* for their behaviour. Consumers were held to protect their own *esteem* or *hedonic motivation* needs as they sought to provide causal inferences for success and failure. That is, there was a tendency to attribute good outcomes to self and bad outcomes to external or situational causes and also a tendency not to lose credibility.

Kelley and Michela (1980) succinctly classed motivations as '*motivation for self-enhancement and self protection*' and '*motivation for the positive presentation of the self to others*'. Prior to field research it was thought that long-haul tourists might be much concerned with self-enhancement. Also because of the inter-related nature of consumption and production in tourism it was thought that the consumer might feel particularly disposed to present the tourism experience in a favourable manner. Intuitively, therefore, it was thought that motivational biases might be of especial relevance in long-haul tourism.

On the other hand, Folkes (1988) argued that it was the consumer alone who was truly aware of the effort that they might have devoted to the success of the product or service experience. Accordingly, the attribution of blame to others and some degree of self-aggrandisement may have had a rational rather than a self-serving response. Folkes also argued that consumers created causal inferences based on false consensus. That is, they were motivated to believe that others shared the same preferences and consumption habits.

2.2.4 Locus, stability, control.

Altogether three underlying and independent dimensions or properties have been identified as of importance in the determination of causal inference. These are *locus, stability and controllability*. Although these dimensions have been derived deductively by attributional theorists Weiner (1985) showed that they have been supported by a wide range of empirical studies. Prior to the participant observation it was reckoned that the relationship between these dimensions and satisfaction might well be supported empirically in the field - although as with other aspects of the theory it was not expected that there would be a *pristine* emergence of reality in relation to the theory. A *clutter* of influences was thought to be the more likely outcome - but a clutter that would benefit from a knowledge of existing attributional theory albeit that such knowledge would subsequently be modified.

Weiner ((1985) (see also 1980a / 1980b) described developments in the analysis of causal structure through from Heider (1958) - the originator of attributional research in psychology. Heider (1958 : 82) outlined the basic causal distinction:

'In common sense psychology (as in scientific psychology) the result of an action is felt to depend on two sets of conditions, namely, factors within the person and factors within the environment'.

This internal-external dimension, otherwise termed the locus dimension, has provided the focus of much research into the structure of causality. *Locus* is concerned with beliefs about who should solve problems - for example, the consumer or the firm.

When a problem results from the actions of a consumer it is suggested that the consumer should be responsible for the solution of the problem. This is *internal locus*. By contrast, if a problem results from the action of a firm it is suggested that the firm is responsible for the solution. This is *external locus*.

Weiner (1980a) also commented on the degree to which a cause was considered by the consumers to be *stable and permanent* or *unstable and temporary*. Weiner classified factors such as ability as internal and stable; effort as internal and unstable; task difficulty as external and stable; and luck as external and unstable.

Folkes et al (1987) stated that inferring a stable cause leads to less desire to repurchase a product than inferring an unstable cause. They also suggested after Weiner et al (1982) and Brown et al (1984) that stable causes increased anger more than temporary causes and that the degree of anger was related to the importance placed on the successful performance of the product.

Finally, the dimension of *controllability* referred to the degree to which consumers and firms were able to control outcomes. Weiner (1980a) made the distinction, stemming from the work of Heider (1958), between control which was *volitional/optional* and control which was *forced/constrained* by a situation. Curren and Folkes (1987) reported that when consumers recognised that control was volitional they were more likely to complain in the event of product failure. Conversely, they were more likely to compliment a firm and recommend a product in the event of product success.

As noted earlier, Weiner's work above was specifically related to *achievement-related contexts* such as success and failure. As such it had a clear relevance to *satisfaction*. In fact, Weiner et al (1978) showed that satisfaction scores were higher for *ability* and *effort* attributions than for attribution to the task, others efforts, or luck. Furthermore, satisfaction more frequently described internal locus attributions. External attribution responses tended to include appreciation and gratification.

It should be added, too, that Weiner's focus on achievement related contexts was also of clear relevance to long-haul tourism.

Folkes et al (1987) exemplified the theory in an airport context. Such subject-relevant exemplification is so rare that it is worth some attention - additionally the exemplification stems from a key writer in the attribution field. When fog or ice delayed a flight, the delay was not controlled by the airline. This contrasted with a delay caused by an airline's attempt to sell more tickets. The consumer response to each case was different. When passengers perceived that delays or solutions to delays were controlled by an airline, they felt angry, did not want to fly on the airline again, and wanted to complain about the delay. Different consumer responses also occurred if an airport delay was due to constant understaffing - a stable cause - or due to a shortage of staff which was perceived by consumers to be temporary in nature. According to Folkes et al passengers would expect future delays and so be less willing to fly the same airline again if they perceived that the delay was due to a stable reason. By contrast, passengers who were subjected to delays caused by unstable causes were less certain of future delays and were more willing to fly the same airline again.

Folkes et al (1987) also added that the *importance* of successful performance was a further influence on the desire to repurchase and the desire to complain through anger.

2.2.5 Consequence

The example from Folkes et al (1987) went beyond a consideration of the *antecedents* of causal inference and also considered the *consequences* of causal inferences.

Attribution theorists contend that the cause inferred for product failure influences how the consumer will respond. In the context of the airport example above the consumer response variously consisted of a reticence to repurchase, a desire to complain and anger.

Folkes (1984a) showed using critical incident technique in a hypothetical (restaurant) situation that the three underlying causal properties or attributional dimensions of stability, locus and controllability influence three types of consumer reactions. First, *expectancy reactions* occur where stable attributions lead to certainty about product success and failure. They also occurred where unstable attributions led to uncertainty about future product performance. Second, *marketplace equity reactions* occurred in which the consumer was owed an apology and a refund when the locus of attribution is placed on the firm. Third, *anger reactions* occurred where the attribution locus for failure was placed on the firm and the failure was considered to be controllable.

Weiner (1980a : 351) showed in an empirical review of the link between causal attributions and the expectancy of success that:

'if one attains success (or failure), and if the conditions or causes of that outcome are expected to remain unchanged, then success (or failure) will be anticipated with an increased degree of certainty.' Furthermore, with reference to causal ascriptions and affective reactions Weiner (1980 : 363) stated that:

'... it is reasonable to hypothesise that there is an association between causal ascriptions for achievement outcomes and our *feelings* (db emphasis) about these accomplishments.'

At such a point it is convenient to finish this outline of attribution as an antecedent of satisfaction. Feelings - emotions - are dealt with as the next research stream that influences the process of CS/D.

2.3 Emotion.

2.3.1 Emotion states and traits

2.3.2 Emotional dimensions and categories

2.3.3 Empirical relevance

2.3.4 Emotion within a CS/D model

It is now fashionable to speak and write about emotion. Such a trend had extended into social psychology by the 1970s and 1980s - social psychology was deemed to have become too *cognitive* and so the role of *affect* was re-examined (Abelson et al (1982).

Izard (1977) pointed out that emotion is not a simple phenomenon and that any definition must take into account the *description* that a person gives of an emotional experience, the *observable expressive patterns* of emotion, particularly those on the face, and also *electrophysiological occurrences* that occur in the body systems. It would require a trained and specialist psychologist and a concentrated focus on emotions to truly identify the full range of consumer emotions. Prior to the participant observation it was clear that the practical reality of applied, empirical consumer behaviour in tourism necessitated that any form of measurement was restricted to the first and just possibly the second element of the Izard outline - Ekman et al (1980) had indirectly and inadvertently shown the difficulty outside the laboratory of measuring facial expressions beyond a distinction between a pleasant and an unpleasant experience. *However, as with each of the reputed antecedents of satisfaction it was useful to carry a well developed understanding of existing theory so as to encourage the potential modification of any general consensus.*

2.3.1 Emotion states and traits

Izard (1977) reviewed the supposed key questions relating to any study of emotion. She distinguished between *emotion states* (particular emotion processes of limited duration) and *emotion traits* (the tendency for an individual to experience a particular emotion with frequency in day to day life). She reminded that almost anyone can learn to inhibit or modify innate emotion expressions and that there is no absolute dichotomy between innate and learned behaviour - nothing is innate, nothing is acquired. Additionally, she acknowledged the convenience of the division of emotions into *positive and negative classes* that were either more or less likely to have desirable consequences - even though a given emotion may have had different effects on

different people, even different effects on the same person in different situations. Finally, she reiterated what was implied in her criteria for a good definition of emotion - that emotion tends to influence all aspects of the individual. Of relevance here, with a view to the evaluation of satisfaction in a tourism context, was the influence of emotion on the body, perceptions, cognition (memory, thoughts and imagination), actions and personality development - although it was thought that the field study would most probably be able to comment only on *perceptions, cognition and actions*. Likewise it was thought that whereas it might be possible to identify emotional states it would be more difficult to identify emotional traits. Despite these drawbacks it was still considered that rich and useful data would emerge from the field study.

2.3.2 Emotional dimensions and categories

Havlena and Holbrook (1986) recorded that the psychological literature had produced two major empirically based approaches to the description and categorisation of emotion. The approach of Mehrabian and Russell (1974) viewed emotions as continuous underlying *dimensions* that distinguished among emotional states. Three dimensions were identified - *pleasure, arousal and dominance* - although Smith and Ellsworth (1985) recorded that it was only the first two dimensions that had been reliably found. Indeed Havlena and Holbrook (1986) referred to a range of other alternatives to dominance (or control) - such as the depth of experience. However, the so called PAD paradigm of Mehrabian and Russell (1974) has received the greatest attention in consumer behaviour. In related work Russell (1983) placed the emotion 'satisfied' alongside a range of other emotions on a two dimensional scale with pleasure/displeasure on one axis and arousal on the other. 'Satisfied' scored relatively highly on the pleasure/displeasure scale but not so highly on the degree of arousal scale. In effect such a conception - which distinguished between different combinations of pleasure and arousal - pre-dated the distinction of Oliver (1989 : 7-10) between 'satisfaction as pleasure' and 'satisfaction as contentment'.

Plutchik (1980), by contrast, viewed all emotions as stemming from a relatively small number of basic emotional *categories* - fear, anger, joy, sadness, disgust, acceptance, expectancy and surprise. The emotional taxonomy of Izard (1977) was broadly comparable and in line with Plutchik (1980) and included a *positive* category - interest and joy; a *negative* category - anger, disgust, contempt, distress, fear, shame and guilt; and a *neutral* category which in theory can amplify both positive and negative emotional experience - surprise. Of course, the important potential role of surprise in the tourism experience has already been emphasised (see 2.1.4).

Of course, it was recognised that these dimensions and categories could be open to criticism in their implied assertion that subjective feelings might be organised into list form. *However, it was thought that they could be applied to the reality of consumer behaviour through participant observation and could capture information about the emotional character of consumption experiences.*

2.3.3 Empirical relevance

Some empirical studies seemed to have particular relevance. For example, Holbrook et al (1984) used the PAD dimensions identified by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) (which they favoured compared to Plutchik's categories) in order to study play activity as an emotional experience - the role of emotions, performance and personality in the *enjoyment* of games. As an important aside which added relevance to the study there are clear parallels between play (as in games, sports and other leisure activities) and tourism - Holbrook, Lehmann, and O'Shaughnessy (1986) showed that the consumption experiences of play and tourism were similar in their mix of *utilitarian/hedonic, tangible/intangible, and objective/subjective* components. Additionally, games were interpreted by Holbrook et al as being *intrinsically* motivated. Therefore, the question that begged to be answered was 'What about tourism'? Intuition suggested that it, too, was basically *intrinsic* in nature - certainly with respect to soft-adventure/activity tourism which was the focus of the long-haul participant observation (ch.6). Also, it has already been suggested that tourists may be motivated by self-enhancement, self-protection and positive presentation (see 2.2.3). Holbrook et al (1986 :737) stated:

'... the evidence that people enjoy succeeding at a game, while hardly surprising, may point towards the importance of other hedonic aspects of consumer behaviour. One suspects that many other consumption phenomena involve emotional consequences only dimly revealed by conventional responses to consumer behaviour'.

The motivational prize in tourism prior to the field research seemed to relate even more often than in games to the satisfaction of success against a set of intrinsic and personal as opposed to extrinsic and public performance standards. This last condition was the sine qua non of one of the conclusions of Holbrook that performance competence could be of significance in the consumption experience - success enhanced feelings of pleasure, arousal and dominance. Intuitively, this offered a strong hint that the same conclusion might be reached in a tourism context (intriguingly, too, tourism consumers on the EM tour were sometimes to use the term 'enjoyment' with more freedom and confidence than the term 'satisfaction').

2.3.4 Emotion within a CS/D model

First step

Emotion may be considered as the third research stream that relates to the process of CS/D. However, Oliver (1993) mentioned that the *emotional/affective* basis of satisfaction is not well represented in the cognitive literature.

And yet, as Havlena and Holbrook (1986 : 394) pointed out:

'...though consumption experiences vary in their mix of utilitarian / hedonic, tangible / intangible, or objective / subjective components... the latter, more emotional aspects of consumption experiences occur to a greater or lesser extent in almost all consuming situations.'

Holbrook and Hirschmann (1982) outlined a brief history of the study of consumer behaviour. They traced the movement from an early emphasis on rational choice, as in classical decision theory, through to logical flow models of bounded rationality (Howard and Sheth (1969)), and on to Bettman's (1979) information processing model. This last model regarded the consumer as a logical thinker - not necessarily the case in reality. Additionally, although the role of affect was considered it was effectively confined to a consideration of brand *likes* and *dislikes* (attitude) and brand *rank* relative to other brands (preference).

This affective role is only a small fraction of the much more wide ranging role that Holbrook and Hirschmann (1982 : 132) envisaged for affect via emotion and feelings. In fact they envisaged a whole complementary system that ran in tandem with the information processing model:

'... researchers have begun to question the hegemony of the information processing perspective on the grounds that it may neglect important consumption phenomena.... Ignored phenomena include various playful leisure activities, sensory pleasures, daydreams, esthetic enjoyment, and emotional responses. Consumption has begun to be seen as involving a steady flow of *fantasies, feelings, and fun* (db emphasis) encompassed by what we call the 'experiential view'.'

There was an obvious appeal for such a widened system within a tourism consumer context - so called '*congenial*' consumer behaviour (Alderson (1957)) which was envisaged as being pursued for its own sake, tending to be performed for the emotional benefits it provided, and being characterised by hedonic, intangible and subjective components.

One key study on affect, satisfaction and consumer behaviour appeared to be that of Westbrook (1987). In separate field studies of automobile owners and CATV subscribers, he researched consumer reports of the nature and frequency of emotional experiences in connection with their product ownership. Of course, such ownership is removed from the tourist service experience but nonetheless seems worthy of consideration because of the thought process that it engenders. Specifically, as regards affect and satisfaction judgement, Westbrook (1987 : 267) found that:

'As hypothesised, both pleasant and unpleasant affective responses in the postpurchase period are related to satisfaction appraisal, approximately equally in magnitude and oppositely in direction, in a strikingly similar manner, across (the) two dissimilar product categories. Moreover these relationships are not mediated by expectation and disconfirmation beliefs. Hence, they suggest that product satisfaction judgements are determined not only by ex post cognitive / semantic comparison processes (by which Westbrook means disconfirmation -db) as typically assumed, but also by additional processes involving the retrieval and integration of relevant product related *affective* experiences (db emphasis).'

The exact temporal positioning of affective response and satisfaction was not determined conclusively in Westbrook's study although it was suggested that the former preceded the latter.

Furthermore, it seemed that attention might need to be focussed on another of the Westbrook (1987) conclusions - that at least in the post-purchase period the affective response to a consumer experience might *rival* satisfaction as a central mediating construct.

Additionally, given that expectation and expectancy disconfirmation were considered in the literature to be important solely in the determination of satisfaction Westbrook argued that affective response is of longer term significance than the former determinants. Of course, this did overlook the view that if a measure of satisfaction lived on in the mind of a consumer in the post-purchase period then so, too, did expectation and expectancy disconfirmation even if it became subsumed.

Beyond the first step

In an already crowded and clouded subject of study Weiner (1985) had appeared to make a connection between studies on *attribution* and *affective* response - already briefly outlined (see 2.2.5). Specifically, he theoretically and empirically proposed that

the three dimensions or properties of causality - locus, stability and controllability - acted as filters for perceived causes of success and failure. Stable causes were proposed to lead to a measure relating to the expectancy of success. Furthermore, all three dimensions led to a variety of common affective (emotional) responses such as anger, gratitude, guilt, hopelessness, pity, pride and shame.

Prior to Weiner, Izard (1977) causally *attributed* the emotions of anger, disgust and contempt to the product or the *seller*. Guilt and shame deflected the attribution to the *individual consumer*. Fear and sadness were attributed to a *situation itself*. In advance of field research these attributions seemed to be sensible in a tourism context.

Meanwhile, it was the belief of Westbrook, (1987), after a review of Izard (1977), Scherer (1982) and Smith and Ellsworth (1985), that only those affects involving causal attribution to the product or its seller had a systematic influence on post-purchase behaviour.

The view of Weiner et al (1980b) on attribution and affect conformed to a temporal sequence of *thought/cognition (attribution) - affect (emotion) - action (behaviour)*. This is a classic tripartite division within psychology. Importantly, the Weiner et al study showed that attributions guided feelings, but that emotional reactions provided the motor and direction for behaviour. Weiner et al also suggested a less straightforward temporal sequence whereby there was interplay between cognitive beliefs and affective responses. Thus certain affects might occur early in the causal chain and trigger appraisal of satisfaction, which in turn elicited additional and different affects. These in turn modified initial satisfaction appraisal.

These ideas were developed by Oliver (1989 : 12) in which he distinguished between primary affects (happiness and sadness) that were largely automatic in nature - deriving from the evaluation 'Is this good or bad for me?' - and distinct emotions (anger, guilt) that required attributions:

'... a framework for analysing buyer reactions to product outcomes... begins with the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm... If disconfirmation is acknowledged and is sufficiently arousing, the attribution phase of the model is invoked. If not, generally positive or negative affects deriving from performance or expectations will determine the consumer's overall response to the product experience. If disconfirmation does evoke the attribution process, the consumer's product response is more complex, consisting of the primary affect deriving from the evaluation 'Is this good or bad for me?') plus specific types of distinct emotions retrieved from the consumer's analysis of the product outcome along the attribution dimensions of locus, stability, and controllability.'

Oliver argued that consumers had different orientations towards a product and that the orientation determined the satisfaction response that was evoked - *satisfaction as contentment, satisfaction as pleasure or relief, satisfaction as novelty and satisfaction as surprise*. The framework functioned for each variant orientation.

In a synthesis of the full range of ideas Oliver (1993 : 419-420) produced a combined cognitive and affect-augmented CS/D model. This is described by Oliver:

'The cognitive antecedents include expectations, performance, disconfirmation, attribution, and equity/inequity. Further, the model shows affect as augmenting these variables in the prediction of satisfaction and, in addition, shows affect as mediating an indirect attribution influence...'

Mano and Oliver (1993 : 465) reiterated this point following their attempt to extend the theoretical and empirical evidence regarding product evaluations, feelings and satisfaction

:'... the results of the present study suggest that the satisfaction response is not easily tied down. It does not respond as a pure affect nor does it exist in the absence of feeling. It is apparently a complex human response with both cognitive and affective components....'

2.4 Equity

The literature on equity theory in the social sciences is extensive. It has been shown to have direct relevance to consumer behaviour including the study of satisfaction and so may be thought of as a further stream of research that relates to the process of CS/D and CS/D in tourism.

Swan et al (1985); Oliver and DeSarbo (1988); and Oliver and Swan (1989a) stated that in specific types of purchase transactions consumers would compare the inputs and outputs of *salespersons* or *institutions* with their own inputs and outputs. This is the basis of equity theory although in addition a consumer might also compare with another *consumer* (Fisk and Coney (1982); Fisk and Young (1985)). Anderson et al (1969 : 1) stated that:

'In considering injustice or inequity, the idea of *relative deprivation* has played a key role. That is, feelings of dissatisfaction and associated pressures for change depend not on the absolute level of reward received but on the relationship between rewards received and rewards expected ... Thus, inequity in the reward-allocation process *is found whenever similar actors are given dissimilar rewards, or dissimilar actors are given similar rewards.*'

In a much quoted article Huppertz, Arenson and Evans (1978) showed empirically - although with the limitation of student consumers in hypothetical retail exchange situations - that fairness ratings declined and complaints increased in scenarios that contained inequitable levels of price and service. Fisk and Coney (1982) then used role play in an *airline* context in order to investigate equitable / inequitable comparisons against satisfaction and quality of service judgements. The role playing consumers had knowledge of better price offers and more equitable waiting times received by fellow consumers. In general, satisfaction and quality of service judgements were related to *equitable* as opposed to *inequitable* situations. Fisk and Coney (1982 : 14) concluded: 'Inequity as evidenced by waiting time, clearly did result in consumer dissatisfaction. This result suggests that waiting time may be a potent source of consumer dissatisfaction with airlines... Inequitable waiting time, also, clearly leads to reduced expectations of service quality... Hence, inequitable waiting time appears to strongly affect the consumer's evaluative processes... Inequitable price should cause consumer dissatisfaction and lower expectations of service quality. This was found to be true. However, one key variable between the price variable and the waiting time variable concerns the perception of choice... it is relatively easy to conceive of subjects who blame themselves for having paid too high a price for the flight... being dissatisfied, but dissatisfied with themselves.'

This was largely replicated by Fisk and Young (1985) again in an airline context - waiting times and pricing overcharges both caused high levels of consumer dissatisfaction.

Swan et al (1985) who concerned themselves with hospital patient satisfaction concluded that equity worked *alongside* expectations and performance as a complementary influence on satisfaction:

'... overall satisfaction with a hospital is related to three major variables: (1) satisfaction with the set of services ... or attributes that collectively make up the set of services that the patient receives (2) fulfillment of patient expectations (whether or not the hospital performed as well as the patient anticipated) (3) equity... the patient's feeling that s/he was treated fairly or unfairly (his/her outcomes were sufficient in comparison to his/her inputs of time, money, pain and so on).'

It might be thought that a hospital service and a tourism service were almost diametric extremes of the service industry but there are also many relevant resemblances that can be drawn.

Whilst the process of equity comparison has been thought to be similar to the comparative process that has already been detailed for expectancy disconfirmation Oliver and Swan (1989b) pointed out that the two constructs were *conceptually different* - on the basis of the antecedents, consequences and the actual processes involved. In the first instance, it was considered that equity was concerned with the inputs and outcomes of others whilst expectancy disconfirmation was concerned only with outcomes. Therefore, the *standard for comparison* was different - although, it could surely be contended that expectations and norms might also qualify as inputs. Second, equity focused on *fairness* and *justice* as an outcome whilst expectancy disconfirmation focused on *performance*. Third, Oliver and Swan suggested that the standards used for the comparison process in equity judgements were *passive interpersonal* norms that had been acquired during socialisation. By contrast, the standards used by expectancy disconfirmation were more *actively processed* - the expectations had been raised by promotion, word of mouth communication, and previous experience. Fourth, the *emotional outcomes* were thought to be different. Austin and Walster (1974) had suggested that negative inequity resulted in distress, resentment and vindication whilst according to Anderson (1969) positive equity had resulted in embarrassment and guilt. By contrast, Oliver and DeSarbo (1988) had believed that negative disconfirmation resulted in disappointment whilst positive disconfirmation had resulted in delight. Walster (1978) had added that equity should result in positive results related to fairness such as contentment whilst Oliver (1981) had believed that confirmation added no such emotional content.

Consequently, Oliver and Swan (1989b :372) suggested:

'The equity concept, then, is thought to be an additional factor in the postpurchase response, which has been largely dominated by the expectancy disconfirmation paradigm.'

The nature of tourism, and inclusive tours in particular, offers considerable scope for interpersonal relationships with inputs and outputs between not only a consumer, salesperson and tour operator (so called 'institution') at the *time of a transaction* - as in Oliver and Swan (1989b) - but also a range of other tour operator representatives and customer service personnel in a range of other circumstances. Bagozzi (1986) in an explication of exchange theory in marketing suggested that equity considerations might be instrumental in the consummation of a sale. In tourism, the researcher considered that such equity considerations might be important in the *whole* production process and not just during the sale - long-haul inclusive tours are consumed as they are produced by the consumer, other consumers and the tour leader and can involve strong interpersonal relationships.

2.5 Interim word on CS/D and time

Prior to a consideration of the methodology and subsequently the primary research it is worthwhile to emphasise that whilst the literature uncovered a considerable amount of material on the supposed antecedents of CS/D there were few examples of research which had *specifically* attempted to link the supposed antecedents within a time framework and an empirical example - tourism related or otherwise.

It is true that the study of consumer behaviour in general is replete with attempts to codify the system of consumer decision making within some implied time framework. From the 'grand theories' onwards this has been the case. Also, in establishing the relative immediacy of, say, performance over expectations in the CS/D judgement, some authors had indirectly suggested a form of temporal ordering. Furthermore, there had been attempts to measure some antecedents in a before and after situation. But these attempts were mostly confined to *questionnaires* and almost without exception were not applied to *extended* service situations such as long-haul inclusive tours.

From such considerations it is evident that this research is distinctive in its emphasis on the *time dimension* in CS/D formation and the parallel emphasis on the *identification and interaction* of the supposed CS/D antecedents within the specific tourism situation

of a long-haul inclusive tour. From this point of view the research study has a special and largely untrammelled character.

Following the establishment here of the relevant literature the next chapter describes and analyses the context of the research study.

Chapter 1 Introduction	Chapter 2 CS/D - Antecedents and antecedent temporal process	<div>Chapter 3 Context</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Tourism and services management ♦ Tour operation ♦ Long-haul inclusive tours ♦ Tour destination ♦ Satisfaction and quality ♦ Satisfaction, price and value 	Chapter 4 Methodology	Chapter 5 Management interviews	Chapter 6 Participant observation	Chapter 7 Interpretation	Chapter 8 Final overview
---------------------------	---	--	--------------------------	------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

Chapter 3: Context

3.0 Tourism and Services Management

3.0.1 Generic service characteristics and tourism characteristics

3.0.2 In sum

3.0.1 Generic service characteristics and tourism characteristics

Tourism management is clearly placed within the framework of services management. In any study of consumer behaviour that is set within this framework it is important to revisit the key writings that have helped to distinguish the study of services management from that of other management in general and also to consider the more recent doubts that have crept into such a distinction. Such writings form a part of the theoretical base against which to juxtapose, analyse and interpret empirical evidence.

Services marketing reviews such as those of Berry and Parasuraman (1993) and Fisk, Brown and Bitner (1995) inevitably mention the work of Shostack (1977) and her contention that marketing until that date had not offered relevant guidance, terminology or practical rules for the service sector. Fisk, Brown and Bitner (1995) characterised this period as the *crawling out* period which ended as the goods vs. services argument became less central to discussion. This was followed by a *scurrying about* period which was most notably marked by two articles from Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry (ZPB)(1985) and Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985). In the first of these they proposed a conceptual framework which summarised the unique characteristics of services. In the second, they published their conceptual model of service quality. Fisk, Brown and Bitner (1985) characterised the period post 1985 as the *walking erect* period during which there was an explosive growth of publications together with increasing theoretical and empirical rigour. Wright (1995 : 39) tracked these stages through the perspective of Kuhn (1970) and the development of paradigms:

'According to Kuhn (1970), the acceptance of a paradigm is unavoidably accompanied by drastically reduced vision as disciples of the new approach seek more precise and robust solutions to the issues that the paradigm has identified as important. In the services marketing field, this has created a tendency to emphasise similarities between different types of services while explicitly ignoring the variation within the service sector.... the literature to date has focused primarily on identifying and

and resolving marketing issues that relate to 'classic services' - those market offerings that have most or all of the characteristics that the discipline has established as unique...'

Specifically, the unique characteristics that have been assumed to exist under the services marketing paradigm are *intangibility*, *inseparability*, *heterogeneity* and *perishability* (Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry (1985)). The foundation of the services marketing paradigm vis-a-vis goods marketing revolves around the way in which these characteristics distinguish services from tangible goods.

Intangibility

ZPB (1985), ZB (1996) consider *intangibility* to be the most basic and most universally cited difference between goods and services. This is because services are *performances* or *actions* rather than objects. Cowell (1984 : 23) stated that:

'It is often not possible to taste, feel, see hear or smell services before they are purchased. Opinions and attitudes may be sought beforehand, a repeat purchase may rely upon previous experience, the customer may be given something tangible to represent the service, but ultimately the purchase of a service is the purchase of something intangible.'

On the other hand, Rathmell (1966) pointed out that a more relevant concept is that of the *goods-service continuum*, rather than a goods-service dichotomy with pure goods at one end and pure services at the other. This was extended by Shostack (1977) into a tangible-intangible dominant continuum. Wyckham, Fitzroy and Mandry (1975), meanwhile, stated that marketers should be less concerned with the goods-service distinctions than creating sets of *needs satisfiers* or *utilities* for particular market segments. Enis and Roering (1981 : 1) argued that:

'Buyers purchase neither tangible objects nor intangible features; rather they purchase a bundle of benefits - a product.'

Such doubts have contributed to the belief of Middleton (1994 : 30) that:

'... although intangibility of travel and tourism products requires careful understanding by marketing managers, and a particular response in the promotion and distribution of products, it is not a generic difference between goods and services of the same order as *inseparability* and *perishability* (db emphasis).'

Inseparability

Inseparability is the term used to describe the *simultaneous production and consumption of a service*. The received argument is that goods are produced first, then

sold and consumed, whereas most services are sold first and then produced and consumed simultaneously. The consumer and the producer *participate* in the production of the service and frequently, too, the production and consumption take place on the premises or in the equipment (owned or hired) of the producer. Additionally, consumers themselves may interact with *other* consumers in the production process. Booms and Bitner (1981) commented on this distinct 'customer interface' and Bitner (1993) suggested that the 'evidence of service' so generated may accordingly involve people (contact employees and other consumers) and the process of production alongside physical evidence.

As in the case of intangibility it is possible to note exceptions to the general view. Riddle (1986) identifies not only 'co-production' of services but also 'self-service' and 'isolated production'. There are many common examples of self-service in tourism (airport baggage recovery, say). Isolated production refers to the case in which part or nearly all of the service is performed outside the consumer's presence. Bitner (1993) shows in her discussion of service mapping or blueprinting that some element of the service production is 'invisible'. Indeed in an attempt to illustrate - in the context of an overnight stay at an hotel - just how many opportunities there were for human interaction, it was indirectly and forcibly illustrated that some elements of the process almost necessarily remain invisible. However, there are examples in tourism which suggest that management sometimes attempts to minimise the invisible element - for example, open-view kitchens in restaurants - although this is not invariably the case.

Pertinently, it is useful to note the finding of Youngdahl and Kellogg (1994) who observed that whilst some increase in co-production has a positive effect on satisfaction - such as occurs when a provider helps to prepare the consumer for the service - other co-production was not so positive and occurred in the presence of product failure. Some inseparability may be enforced because of negative circumstances.

Heterogeneity

The *heterogeneity* characteristic of services is largely connected with the vagaries of human interaction between and among service contact employees and consumers.

Zeithaml and Bitner state (1996 : 20):

'Because services are performances, frequently produced by humans, no two services will be precisely alike. The employees delivering the service frequently *are* the service in the customer's eyes, and people may differ in their performance from day to day or even hour to hour. Heterogeneity also

results because no two customers are precisely alike; each will have unique demands or experience the service in a unique way.'

Lovelock (1983), however, proposed that firms could either choose to emphasise production methods that are equipment-based, or people-based or based on a combination of the two. The implication of this proposal is that the people-based firm would be likely to be more heterogeneous because there is a greater chance of interaction between and among service contact employees and consumers - and standardisation and quality control are deemed to be more difficult for such a production method.

Middleton (1994 : 30), however, strongly argues against such a position:

'Taken literally, heterogeneity means that every service performance is unique to each customer. Strictly, because human beings are not machines this is true. But in practice it is a totally academic concept and it is absurd to apply it to frequently used service products such as those marketed by banks, transport operators, fast-food chains, and other large-scale service operators, all of which are committed to the specification and quality control of service performance.'

On the other hand, many experiences, tourism experiences included, do exhibit rather more involvement than that to be found in the banks, surface transport operators and fast-food chains to which Middleton draws attention. Deighton (1994 : 124) considered such involvement:

'It is a truism to say that all services are performed. To say that all services are performances, however, is to say something slightly different and much more interesting. To go further and say that all performances are staged performances is very different and quite provocative.'

Performance and heterogeneity

Deighton (1994 : 124-126) makes a threefold division of *performance*. '*Non-performances*' are occurrences that just happen without any intention to satisfy another party. An action becomes a performance when an audience believes that it can hold the actor to some standard of normality or excellence. '*Contractural performances*' are actions that are done to fulfill an obligation, a debt, or a contract to another party. '*Staged performances*', which extend performances beyond the contractural level, are put on with deliberate concern for the impression that they will make on the other party. The actor deliberately and intentionally contrives an effect.

Deighton (1994 : 127-129) ascribed four motivations for performance - '*skill performances*' are staged displays of competence in naturalistic settings for the benefit of passive observers; '*show performances*' deliver entertainment to passive observers in nonrealistic settings; '*thrill performances*' refer to active participation in naturalistic settings, in which the staging, although present, is not intrusive; '*festive performance*' involves active participation in a built context created by deliberate staging and costuming.

In order to succeed a performance must *involve* an audience and capture its attention. This is the core of Deighton's argument and its link with the concept of heterogeneity. The performer needs to move the service encounter beyond perfunctory involvement and what Deighton calls 'divided attention' toward more 'focussed attention' in which the consumer is more tightly involved with the performance, accepting and executing a more involving role. 'Engrossed attention' may even follow in which the consumer plays a role with an enthusiasm which begins to become its own reward. The consumer is empowered in this instance to *co-produce* the performance. It is difficult to conceive of equipment-based services or even highly scripted people-based services producing such a performance. There is a need for producers - on both the provider and consumer side - who are involved up to the third degree of Deighton's five degree scale. Such involvement inevitably points toward the acceptance of the concept of heterogeneity. Deighton (1994 : 136-137) concluded that:

'For contractual performance, the expectancy confirmation/disconfirmation paradigm guides service managers well. When the idea of satisfaction is applied to staged performance, however, (there are) some ways in which conventional views of quality and customer satisfaction are incomplete... when the term satisfaction is applied to performances, there is usually some ambiguity. It is usually unclear who should get the credit, the actor who performs or the object with which he or she performs or even the service institution within which the performance occurs... or the customer.... Satisfaction is not simply a matter of ensuring that the event conforms to expectations ... satisfaction with a performance is an interactive concept... failure to recruit the audience can damage an otherwise good performance. Satisfaction on one occasion is, therefore, no guarantee of satisfaction on a subsequent occasion.'

Such a situation is truly heterogeneity writ large.

Perishability

Finally, *perishability* refers to the fact that service production is fixed in time and space. Services cannot be saved, stored, resold or returned. Spare seats on a package tour, or any other tourism event, represent potential revenue that cannot be recovered. Additionally, the problem of perishability is compounded by the probability of external

fluctuations in demand caused by predictable and unpredictable occurrences. Even though computer systems can now allow available capacity and probable demand to be predicted with some degree of accuracy the characteristic of perishability places additional pressures on the service manager. Perhaps this characteristic may seem to have the least relevant application to this research. However, it might be argued that consumers may also feel the effect of perishability. This may occur both during the purchase period and also during consumption - perishability could increase the tension to perform.

In sum

Each of these features which are frequently said to distinguish services from tangible goods may together combine to produce a particular service character for the tourism industry - with the qualification, of course, that there are wide intra-industry differences.

It is also necessary to consider if tourism may be in any ways further distinguished from other services. Middleton (1994) considered that tourism does indeed have some particular characteristics beyond the generic characteristics that distinguish services from goods - *seasonality and demand fluctuations; interdependence (sub-sector interlinkage) of tourism products; and high fixed costs*. Additionally, Seaton (1996) justified some further differences between tourism and other services - *tourism is more supply led than other services; tourism is a high-involvement, high-risk product to its consumers; tourism is a product partly constituted by the dreams and fantasies of consumers; tourism is an extended product experience with no predictable critical evaluation point*.

Of course, none of these extra differences are unique to tourism . Perhaps the uniqueness may again come from the *combination* of some or all of the differences.

Both the generic service characteristics and the supposedly special tourism characteristics - either singly or in combination - demand a response from management, consumer service personnel and consumers. In effect, such 'service climate dimensions' (Schneider and Bowen (1993 : 43)) make a notable contribution to a particular *context* for the research study of long-haul inclusive tours.

3.1 Tour Operation

Tour operation is concerned with the assemblage of tourism products and the marketing of *packages* to the final consumer. Its origins are generally related back to Thomas Cook (Brendan (1990)) although its modern expression developed through the 1950s onward. Packages have been defined in law (HMSO:1993) - although not without some disagreement and doubt with regard to their scope (Grant and Mason :1995). Middleton (1994 : 292) defined 'tourism packages' or the trade term 'inclusive tours' (ITs) as follows:

'Standardised, quality controlled, repeatable offers comprising two or more elements of transport, accommodation, food, destination attractions, other facilities, and services (such as travel insurance). Product packages are marketed to the general public, described in print or other media, and offered for sale to prospective customers at a published, inclusive price, in which the costs of the product components cannot be separately identified.'

Atherton (1994 : 193) provided a complementary definition:

'A package holiday is a complex service product which is an experiential, intangible, perishable, consumable, composite, international export'.

Tour operation frequently - although not inevitably - involves the creation of packages for *group travel*. The emphasis on group travel within the research was a forced constraint although the importance of group travel in the package industry is so great that the constraint in no way obviates the research. The advantages of group travel for the consumer - stressed by practitioners such as de Souto (1993) - include characteristics such as known costs, economy, convenience and less worry, companionship and shared interests, choice accommodations and trip escort. The trip escort - the 'tour leader' within the participant observation and variously called the 'tour guide' and 'tour manager' among the management interviewees - emerged with particular force as an important contextual component in the primary research.

3.2 Long-haul inclusive tours

There is no standard definition of the term 'long-haul'. Indeed, the term *long-haul* as used in everyday language - and applied to a form of tourism that needs to be positively marketed - is sometimes treated with wry despair by management. However, the tourism trade would generally recognise a guideline that encompassed travel of greater than 3,000 miles or six hours fly time. There are anomalies in this guideline but in Northern European terms this would *include* destinations in sub Saharan Africa,

Canada and the USA, South America, Australasia and the Far East but *exclude* the Mediteranean including the Middle East.

It would seem intuitively that the *extra spatial and temporal distance* from the source region of long-haul tourism would involve extra contextual difficulties for consumers and tour operator management - Poynter (1993) was of the opinion that the most difficult tour to manage was the international, multi-day air tour which encompassed several destinations. Many of the tours recounted within the management interviews - as well as the EM tour - also possessed additional complications created by the multi-modal ground transportation. Again, the emphasis of Poynter (1989) which highlighted the crucial importance of the *ground operator* in consumer satisfaction appeared to be a particularly pertinent element of context.

Both prior and during the research period one notable characteristic of long-haul ITs has been their continued *growth* (EIU 1990; Mintel 1992, 1994; Yale 1995). Perhaps the growth of long-haul travel has not yet reached the vision of the future identified by Inayatullah (1995 : 414) but a start has been made:

'Travel has begun the process of creating a narrative in which there is no longer any allegiance to a particular place... The loneliness that results from this discontinuity with history might be resolved not through the search of one place *but the realisation that the planet itself is home.*' (db emphasis)

Middleton (1991 : 189) outlined the implications of a maturing market in inclusive tours and identified a number of underlying trends. Although not *pinpointed* with regard to long-haul inclusive tours some of these seemed to justify the use of the trends as a proxy - confirmed in the participant observation - for the general context of long-haul tourism and the context within which long-haul tourists process their tourism experience. Mature markets:

- 'comprise more experienced, more knowledgeable and therefore more demanding customers, more certain of what they want and what they find unacceptable
- will be able to use the conditions of the EC Package Travel Directive to gain compensation...
- look for more environmentally attractive and sustainable holiday products where the choice is offered...
- travel frequently...
- look for core advantages of packages (pricing, convenience, reliability and easy access) without the traditional requirement and stigma of travelling and staying together in highly visible groups in chartered flights and hotels...'

Some special elements of long-haul tourism that have made a notable contribution toward the identified growth and maturity have been a switch away from *passivity* and

towards *activity* - often associated with special interests (CIMTIG 1995; Weiler and Hall (1992). This was reflected strongly in the particular context of the participant observation (EM) and was a conspicuous element of the tour products offered by nearly all the tour operators interviewed during the course of the management interviews.

With regard to the motivational characteristics of the long-haul *tourists* on a long-haul inclusive tour - as represented in motivation theory - the long-haul tourist intuitively but logically fitted into the higher levels of the Maslow (1943) hierarchy - reaching toward belonging and love, esteem and self-actualisation; sought rather more after wanderlust rather than sunlust (Gray (1970)); and would be found at the allocentric rather than psychocentric end of the Plog (1990) psychographic classification.

Long-haul tourism and tourists, indeed, would appear to be at the edge of the 'new tourism' revolution foreseen by Poon (1994 : 91-92) in which there is a move away from mass tourism and impersonalised services and the creation of a new generation of 'sun-plus' tourists (if not 'wanderlust') espousing some care for the natural environment and authentic tourism.

3.3 Tour Destination

Whilst the primary research interviews did not deal with one particular set of destinations, the participant observation was focussed, of course, on Malaysia and to a lesser extent Singapore (ch. 6). The reasons for this decision will be outlined fully in the methodology. Details of the participant observation itinerary are provided in Appendix 4 and also a map highlighting locations mentioned in the description and analysis of the participant observation are provided in the text (fig.6.1)

3.4 Satisfaction and Quality

3.4.1 Distinctiveness and commonality

3.4.2 Linkage

3.4.3 Consensus

3.4.1 Distinctiveness and commonality

The understanding of the term quality is also required as a background or context to any study of satisfaction. This is not only because it appeared that much of the academic and trade literature merged the two terms - often unwittingly but wrongly - a situation that was clearly to be avoided in this study. Of course, it was not known prior to the primary research with management and consumers whether such confusion also existed in the field - if indeed it did this would clearly be an important part of the context that needed to be understood.

Certainly, until comparatively recently there has not been an academic consensus regarding the definition and conceptual understanding of the term quality. Indeed, Gronroos (1984 : 36) referred to the 'missing service quality concept' and succinctly described the definitional difficulties:

'The term 'service quality' is frequently used by both academicians and practitioners. However, it is never defined in a way which could guide management decisions. Too often the term 'quality' is used as if it were a variable itself, and not a function of a range of resources and activities. To state that service firms, for instance, will have to develop the quality of their services in order to be able to compete successfully in the future is meaningless, unless one can: 1. define how service quality is perceived by the consumers; and 2. determine in what way service quality is influenced.'

Early definitions of service quality suggested that a comparison should be made between what consumers felt should be offered by a service provider and the provider's actual performance. This sort of definition may at first glance appear to be identical to that of expectancy disconfirmation. In a general sense, it is beyond doubt that there is much for the researcher of service satisfaction to learn from the now extensive literature on service quality. Actually, however, clear boundaries can be highlighted between the two concepts - there is rather more to satisfaction than the fit between expectations and perceptions of performance and various authors have suggested a variety of other distinctions between satisfaction and service quality.

For example, Iacobucci et al (1994) reported that satisfaction has been deemed to be more relevant at the *situation* or *encounter* level whereas quality has been thought of as a more *global, holistic* consideration developed and maintained over a long period of time - during which multiple service encounters are experienced. Certainly, the definitions of satisfaction by Howard and Sheth (1969), Hunt (1979), Oliver (1981) and Tse and Wilton (1988) all relate to a specific transaction. Also, in the early focus group work of Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) it was found that respondents could be satisfied with a specific service even when they did not think that the overall service was of high quality. Bolton and Drew (1994) suggested the interesting application, with the acceptance of such a distinction, that customer *satisfaction* tends to be more sensitive to service changes than service quality *attitudes* which are more subject to slow change over time.

Recently, however, Zeithaml and Bitner (1996) have suggested that, although the issue is not yet finally resolved, service quality and customer satisfaction can be viewed *both* at the service encounter level and also at a more global level.

It has also been argued that satisfaction necessarily involves *direct experience* with a service whereas a judgement on quality does not inevitably require such involvement. Such an argument is difficult to easily reconcile against commonsense and tends to assume that the consumer is a gullible individual rather swayed by marketing and other signals of quality. One plausible intuitive example, perhaps, was given by Oliver (1993b) in his assertion that establishments such as 5-star restaurants could be perceived as high quality by consumers who had never visited them. However, the lie to this suggestion was surely given in a comment of Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988 : 31) during a discussion of their SERVQUAL instrument - the key element in much of the recent practical and academic literature on quality:

'Because meaningful responses to the perception statements require respondents to have some knowledge of or experience with the firm being researched, SERVQUAL is limited to current or past customers of that firm'.

A current or past customer obviously has direct experience. A respondent who merely had knowledge of a firm might only give full credit to that knowledge in a post-experience situation.

Further differences have been noted between the quality concept and the satisfaction concept in the meaning placed on the word *expectations*. In much of the service quality literature and in practical tools such as SERVQUAL expectations are viewed as desires or wants of consumers - what they feel a service provider should offer rather

than what they would offer. By means of illustration no less than 16/22 of the expectation statements used in SERVQUAL employ the word 'should' - although in a rather contradictory stance Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1991) do concede that customer service expectations can be viewed as dual-leveled. That is, there are desired *should be* levels and adequate *will be* levels of expectation which are separated by a *zone of tolerance*. Be that as it may, expectation as used in satisfaction is commonly viewed as a *prediction* of what is likely to happen. Oliver (1993b : 79-80) illustrates the consequence of this argument as follows:

'Ideal or excellence-based expectations may be the reference for expectations of quality, while the more common predictive expectations may operate for direct influences on satisfaction. It now may be clear how consumers can be satisfied with low quality and dissatisfied with high quality... Satisfaction with low quality can exist whenever a person's expectations in a given situation are low and performance is adequate to the task.... Similarly, dissatisfaction with high quality can ensue when some element of the service delivery is not up to personal standards (that is, when a person's predictive expectations are higher than those normally used to judge quality).'

Iacobucci et al (1994) discussed an additional level of uniqueness by making a possible distinction between the relative cognitive and affective content of satisfaction judgements and quality judgements. With characteristic precision they suggested that judgements of *quality* were more *external* and *cognitive*. Consumers posed questions such as 'Was the experience of high quality?'. Judgements of *satisfaction* are more *internal* and *affective* with consumer questions such as 'Did you like it?' The affective or emotional character of satisfaction judgements are dealt with in depth elsewhere (see 2.3).

Iacobucci et al (1994) also suggested that there may be a difference between the *standards of comparison* used in satisfaction evaluations and in quality evaluations. They related their ideas to those of Thibaut and Kelley (1959) (2.1.1) and said that judgements for perceived service quality might compare observed service expectations against industry standards (or *managerial specifications*). By contrast, judgements of customer satisfaction compared observed service experience against the *customers own specifications*. However, these ideas were merely introduced and not empirically explored - although without moving too far ahead the participant observation study in the present research allowed some reflection and confirmation of these suggestions. Consumers actually turned out to be rather more discriminating and intuitively seemed to realise that quality was *management driven* and satisfaction *consumer driven*.

3.4.2 Linkage

Oliver (1993b) claimed an awareness of only five attempts to *bridge* service quality and satisfaction in one coherent theory (Bitner 1990; Bolton and Drew 1991; Cronin and Taylor 1992; Swartz and Brown 1989; Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman 1991). Each of these was revealed as having clear limitations.

Both Bitner (1990) and Bolton and Drew (1991) viewed satisfaction in terms of expectancy-disconfirmation (2.1) and concluded that satisfaction precedes quality. With reference to Bolton and Drew (1991) Iacobucci et al (1994 : 7) perhaps too succinctly, even if logically, dismissed their conclusion with an implied offer to consider a 'nonsensical' statement such as 'I am happy, therefore it was good' - a statement in which the satisfaction judgement comes before the quality judgement. For his part Oliver (1994) pointed out that satisfaction was not actually measured by Bolton and Drew - an added level of complexity recognised by Bolton and Drew as requiring further research.

As regards Bitner (1990), Oliver (1993b) showed that her measure of quality was actually a measure of attitude - a concept which Oliver (1980) has empirically demonstrated elsewhere as superordinate to satisfaction.

Meanwhile, Oliver (1993b) also criticised Zeithaml et al (1993) on the grounds that they defined satisfaction as the gap between predictive expectations and perceptions of performance. In fact, such a description is consistently applied elsewhere as a definition of the disconfirmation gap rather than satisfaction.

It is clear, too, that Swartz and Brown (1989) also fell short of creating a well established bridge between quality and satisfaction on rather basic grounds. Their procedure and measures were well founded and they made a whole series of suggested managerial implications. However, with a close reliance on SERVQUAL they essentially measured and evaluated service *quality* in the (medical) service encounter and not *satisfaction* - a confusion of the sort outlined earlier. They assumed but did not test whether the quality gaps that arose from inconsistent perceptions of expectations and experiences between patients and physicians had a direct influence on satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Bolton and Drew (1994 : 180) still suggested the same multistage temporal order of customer service assessment as in their earlier work (perception of performance -

satisfaction - quality - value - intentions). However, they also suggested one attractive solution to the supposed conceptual overlap.

'In general, there is an underlying tension between structural models of CS/D, which tend to capture the richness of customers' cognitive processes and structural models of service quality, which tend to reflect (via customer perceptions) a rich set of service attributes. Because these two concepts are related, the *reduced form* models of CS/D and perceived service quality may appear to be very similar.... However certain variables (eg. perception of particular attributes) may affect CS/D, but not perceived quality, or vice versa. Further the coefficients (ie. importance weights) of the predictor variables will certainly be very different. Hence, although reduced form models of CS/D and perceived quality may be similar, they will not be identical.'

Iacobucci et al (1994) point out that parsimony is both the strength and simultaneously the weakness of both the CS/D model and the service quality gap model.

3.4.3 Consensus

From this debate Zeithaml and Bitner (1996) observed that there had been an emerging consensus which considered that satisfaction was a *superordinate* concept to quality. In other words, even with a close merger of the two concepts there would always be a distinction created by the *antecedent* nature of quality to satisfaction. Satisfaction had quality as an *additional cause* and quality had satisfaction as an *additional effect*.

This still did not mean, of course, that the consumer, the manager or even most academics or practitioners could easily distinguish between the two concepts of satisfaction and quality and any superordinate or subordinate position of one relative to another.

Iacobucci et al (1994 : 12) provided a debateable although attractive, real-world conclusion to the quality and satisfaction debate by effectively querying the relevance of its end product.:

'If one's research goals include an understanding of the consumer-evaluative process, then the direction of the relationship between (perceived service) quality and (customer) satisfaction becomes important, but if one's research needs were more managerial/practical, it could easily be argued that the direction is irrelevant, given that both quality and satisfaction are likely to affect the ultimately more important business measures of intent to repurchase, and the like. Theoretically, direction of causality might be determined through experimentation, though not necessarily through causal analysis, given the high degree of multicollinearity and the likely incapability of subjects' making fine empirical distinctions.'

The particular requirements of this research work were both concerned with understanding the consumer evaluative process and (in the terms of Iacobucci) more practical in scope. This dictated the researcher's attempt here to distinguish between the two concepts and at least to be aware of any possible distinction or linkage during the course of the field research and subsequent analysis and interpretation. It also highlighted the need to determine whether managers and consumers in the field made any particular distinction or linkage between quality and satisfaction.

3.5 Satisfaction, Price and Value

3.5.1 Price

3.5.2 Value

3.5.3 Price and Quality

It was also felt that price and value were two further concepts that needed to be probed and placed in an overall context relative to satisfaction before proceeding on to any field research and analysis. Zeithaml and Bitner (1996), placed *price* as one of the three dominant subordinate components of satisfaction - along with *service quality* and *product quality*. However, although their scheme explicitly referred to the term *price* their accompanying text was explicitly concerned with the term *value*. Such a basic confusion, albeit easily corrected, reinforces the need to precisely state the meaning of each term and the existing understanding of their relationship with quality and, perhaps thereby, satisfaction.

3.5.1 Price

First, price. An economist would argue that price was an indicator of the cost or sacrifice that had to be made in order to acquire a good or service. In traditional demand theory buyers of products were assumed to know the *attributes* of products and the *utility* to be derived from the purchase of each unit of each product. However, these assumptions might be far from reality - for example, buyers might not have perfect information about product attributes and might also not be perfect information processors. Accordingly, inferences have to be made about information *cues* - one of which is price. *Perceptions*, therefore, become important.

Customer perception of service price vis-a-vis goods/product price is complicated on a number of scores. Monroe (1989) suggested that *customer reference price* - a price point in memory for a good or service based on the price last paid, the price most

frequently paid or the average of all prices - was more inaccurate for services than for goods. This might be because services can be readily tailored to specific, often individual and momentary needs or because customers feel overwhelmed with the information that they need to gather. Both of these situations mean that *cross comparisons* of service prices are difficult. Additionally, services are encumbered by greater *nonmonetary costs* than goods - costs of time (wait lines); search costs (customer effort invested in the identification and selection of services); and psychological costs (fear and uncertainty, for example). Finally, customers may make greater use of price as a cue to quality, particularly where brand names are not strong or quality is difficult to detect or where price varies a great deal within a class of services. All of these points appeared to be particularly pertinent to long-haul tourism.

3.5.2 Value

Second, value. Zeithaml and Bitner (1996 :498) defined perceived value as:

'... the consumer's overall assessment of the *utility* of a service based on *perceptions* of what is received and what is given' (db emphasis).

Customers make decisions based on *perceived value* and not solely on price. This bridge between price and value can be deepened by a consideration of the three classic approaches to the pricing of services - *cost based pricing; competition based pricing; and demand based pricing*. As Zeithaml and Bitner (1996 : 496) argued:

'(Cost based pricing and competition based pricing) are based on the company and its competitors rather than on customers. Neither approach takes into consideration that customers may lack reference prices, may be sensitive to nonmonetary prices, and may judge quality on the basis of price. All of these factors can and should be accounted for in a company's pricing decisions. The third major approach to pricing, demand based pricing involves setting prices consistent with customer perceptions of (service) value: prices are based on what customers will pay for the services provided.'

This may be simplistic, insomuch as cost based pricing and competition based pricing are also customer driven (at least indirectly). However, demand based pricing does suggest that price needs to be balanced against a perceived value which has a wider frame of reference than monetary value alone. Zeithaml and Bitner (1996 : 496) added that:

'When services require time, inconvenience, and psychic and search costs, the monetary price must be adjusted to compensate. And when services save time, inconvenience, and psychic and search costs, the customer is likely to be willing to pay a higher monetary price.'

Of course, price can be the most important component of value. Zeithaml (1988) classified four types of value from a consumer perspective - value that focuses on low price; value that focuses on the benefits that are received; value as a trade-off between money and quality; value as a trade-off between benefits and sacrifices (money, time costs, search costs, psychological costs).

Holbrook and Corfman (1983, 1985) in turn defined value rather more broadly than Zeithaml. The broadness of their definition can, perhaps, be gauged by the citation that they make to Rokeach (1973) who suggested that the concept of value might serve as the core concept in all the social sciences. Be that as it may Holbrook and Corfmann (1985 : 40) stated that:

'(Value is) ... a relativistic (comparative, personal, situational) preference characterising a subject's experience of interaction with some object.'

Holbrook and Corfman (1985 : *ibid.*) continued by offering an explanation:

'This definition emphasises four key points. First, value involves preference - broadly interpreted as favorable disposition.... Second, value is neither wholly objective or subjective....Third, value is relativistic in at least three senses: it is comparative in that it involves the rating or ranking of one object against another; it is personal in that it differs among individuals; it is situational in that it hinges on the context within which an evaluative judgment occurs. Fourth, value is an *experience* and resides not in acquisition of the object but rather in its consumption (its usage or appreciation).'

3.5.3 Price and Quality

The role of price as a cue to perceived quality has already been briefly suggested above. Scitovsky (1945) is generally credited with the notion of a relationship between price and perceived quality. He argued that judging quality by price merely implies a belief that price is determined by the competitive interplay of the forces of supply and demand. Leavitt (1954) hypothesised that consumers felt some conflict in making a choice when price was the only available price differential. Therefore, consumers selected a higher price in order to allay such conflict. This work acted as a catalyst for much detailed research - product orientated rather than service orientated - but in review both Monroe and Krishnan (1985) and Peterson and Wilson (1985) were only able to make a tentative conclusion that people made positive inferences about quality on the basis of price. Peterson and Wilson (1985 : 264) stated:

'Past research on the price-perceived quality relationship has clearly established one 'fact' - *some consumers* use price as a cue to quality for *some products*'.

They, therefore, suggested two possible mediating factors that could create a more general and more robust relationship. First, when an individual's perceived risk of

product failure was high for selected lower-priced products, and little could be gained from that risk, they preferred higher priced (comparative) products. Second, when individuals are relatively more price reliant they were more likely to prefer the higher priced (comparative) product.

Monroe and Krishnan (1985), for their part, suggested that other information cues such as brand could interact with price.

Steenkamp and Hoffmann (1994), in their consideration of price as a *market signal* for service quality, were also forced to draw heavily on the economic literature that has tended to address products rather than services. However, they proposed two reasons why the strength of the price-quality relation may be *weaker* for services rather than goods. First, services typically contained a higher proportion of *credence attributes* as opposed to search and *experience attributes*. Second, after Salop and Stiglitz (1977), they suggested that the proportion of well-informed customers that could effectively discipline the market would be *lower* in service oriented markets. Intuitively, both of these conditions existed in tourism services although this was not entirely confirmed in the field research or the EM tour.

Of course, the corollary of these suggestions as concluded by Steenkamp and Hoffmann (1994) is that consumers may *not* be able to reliably employ price cues (and advertising cues) as indicators of quality. They are, therefore, forced to use 'idiosyncratic' cues such as the extent of prior experience or the opportunity cost of time involved in conducting a search of the market.

In sum, from the evidence on satisfaction and quality (3.4) and also satisfaction, price and value (3.5) price was not the same as perceived value; the linkage between price and perceived quality for products and even more so for services appeared to be inconclusive; perceived value was not the same as perceived quality - quality was an evaluation whereas value was a trade-off.

Even more, the super-ordinate position of satisfaction might be called in to question - an 'emerging consensus' (see 3.4.3) did not eliminate some reasonable doubt. So, whilst it was necessary to be aware of the various writings on price, value, quality and satisfaction it was also important to retain an open view on these within the field research.

Chapter 1 Introduction	Chapter 2 CS/D - Antecedents and antecedent temporal process	Chapter 3 Context	<div>Chapter 4 Methodology</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ General overview◆ Stage 1 exploratory management interviews◆ Stage 2 extended management interviews◆ Literature search◆ Case study◆ Participant observation◆ Post-tour consumer interviews◆ Post-script</div>	Chapter 5 Management interviews	Chapter 6 Participant observation	Chapter 7 Interpretation	Chapter 8 Final overview
---------------------------	---	----------------------	--	------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.0 General Overview

4.0.1 Rationale of Research Study

4.0.2 Research plan

4.0.3 Research problem

4.0.4 Review of related research

4.0.5 Definition of concepts, variables, and hypotheses

4.0.6 Selection of research design - exploratory, descriptive, explanatory or causal

4.0.7 Selection of data collection techniques

4.0.8 Selection of subjects

4.0.9 Data processing and information analysis

4.0.10 Practical Rationale

4.0.11 Times Change

A distinctive methodological approach and set of techniques emerged in order to address the research questions - much different from those originally conceived. Each element of the primary and secondary research will be discussed in depth later in this chapter. At this stage, however, it is necessary to discuss the methodology in more general terms.

4.0.1 Rationale of Research Study

The rationale of this study is both academic and practical. The research was conceived with the dual objective of both meeting the rigour of academic requirements and making a contribution towards knowledge and understanding that would be recognised and valued by tourism management.

4.0.2 Research plan

An emphasis was placed on the adoption of an appropriate *research plan* as outlined by a whole range of authors. For example, Pizam (1987 : 63) divided the tourism research investigation into seven sequential steps:

- Formulation of the research problem
- Review of related research
- Definition of concepts, variables, and hypotheses

- Selection of research design - descriptive, explanatory or causal
- Selection of data collection techniques
- Selection of subjects
- Planning of data processing and analysis

One addendum, however, needs to be injected in to such an outwardly rational approach. Whilst the researcher indeed followed the research steps as outlined by Pizam (1987) the course of the research was not always as linear and smooth as that projected. Indeed, a comment made by Hammersley (1992 : 172) in a slightly different context seems to be a most appropriate description of the true progress of a research plan:

'What is involved is not a cross-roads where we have to go left or right. A better analogy is a complex maze where we are repeatedly faced with decisions, and where paths wind back to one another'.

Additionally, the approach of the researcher involved some ethnographic study and a comment from Agar (1986 : 12) was viewed with interest by the researcher - even if it was not entirely embraced in all its facets:

'Ethnographers set out to show how social action in one world makes sense from the point of view of another. Such work requires an intense personal involvement, an abandonment of traditional scientific control, an improvisational style to meet situations not of the researcher's making, and an ability to learn from a long period of mistakes. The language of the received view of science just doesn't fit the details of the research process very well if you are doing ethnography'.

The actual progress of the research through time and a summary of the key events and understandings is detailed in fig. 4.1.

4.0.3 Research problem

Key questions

The *research problem* - an investigation of consumer behaviour in tourism with specific reference to CS/D on long-haul inclusive tours was delineated by reference to a number of key questions - a catch all / primary question and two specific / secondary questions.

Catch all / primary:

How and why do tourism consumers, consumer service personnel and management vary concerning their observed or expressed thoughts, feelings and

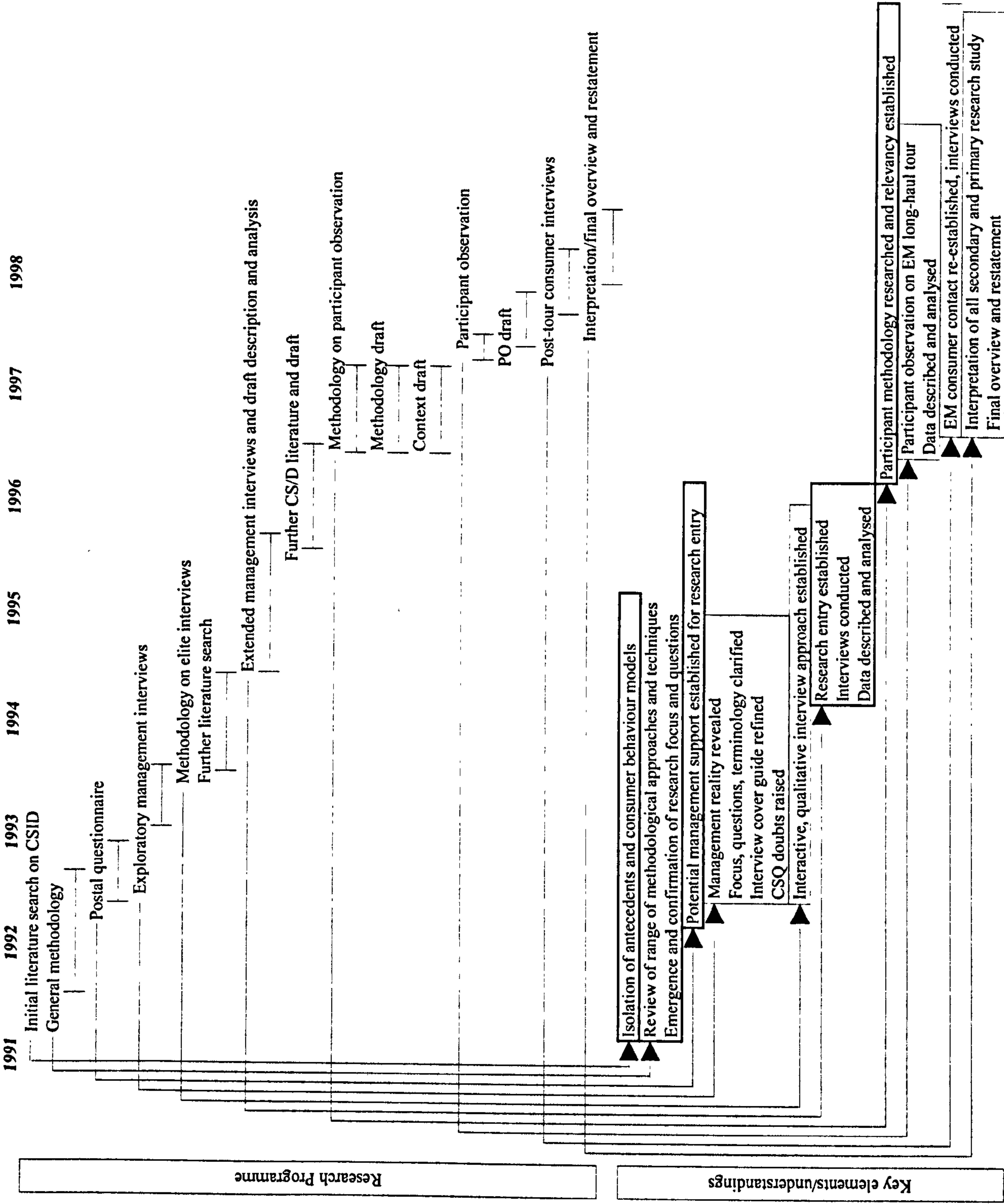


Figure 4.1

actions with regard to consumer satisfaction in relation to a long-haul inclusive tour?

Specific / secondary:

How do the generically recognised antecedents of satisfaction function and relate for tourism consumers / consumer service personnel / management with regard to consumer satisfaction in relation to a long-haul inclusive tour?

How and why do tourism consumers / consumer service personnel / management consider that consumer satisfaction varies through time in relation to a long-haul inclusive tour?

Whilst other elements of the research plan were progressively altered or modified with time these questions remained largely unchanged throughout the research period - even if they became more focussed. In broad terms the researcher knew what the research was about from an early stage. Perhaps this was a result of the initial effort put in to the production of a simple, clear and complete research problem.

It is worthwhile expanding on the choice of some essential aspects of the research problem. With regard to the topic of *CS/D* the touchpaper that fuelled the initial academic interest was Bitner et al (1990) which opened up some of the established literature and journal sources on *CS/D*, suggested emergent themes and also concerned itself with a tourism example. *Satisfaction* was a common buzzword at the start of the research and the continued and frequent mention of the term in both tourism industry and academic publications and pronouncements has shown few signs of abating - a mirror of the sustained debate within services in general as well as tourism in particular. Furthermore, in the early 1990s the importance of *long-haul tourism* was firmly established and indeed the researcher intuitively felt that it was poised for growth. Although the future of *inclusive tours* was not so certain at that time - indeed there have continued to be some doubters particularly with reference to the short-haul market - such doubts were not held by the researcher. The reality of events throughout the research period has been that the market for inclusive long-haul tours has become more enlarged and diversified with a greater number of niche operators and a parallel interest and growth among mass market operators in a range of destinations. Therefore, the research focus on long-haul inclusive tours had both initial and sustained relevance.

It is also worthwhile detailing the emphasis on *CS/D change through time* on a *vacation sequence* and the chosen view of a *variety of perspectives*.

Particularly, the framework of the inclusive tour delimited the boundaries of the study in *temporal* space. Of notable early influence was the work of Van Raaij and Francken (1984) who developed a tourism specific model of consumer behaviour throughout the 'vacation sequence'. The notion of a vacation sequence was crucial throughout the research. It was practical experience which informed the researcher that tour operator *management* sought primarily to analyse CS/D towards the end or after the end of a vacation. Additionally, the researcher soon realised that there were only a limited number of *academic* articles that sought to analyse CS/D, or any aspect of CS/D, during any stage of the vacation sequence other than towards the end or after the end of a vacation.

The concern with CS/D from a *variety of perspectives* - management, consumer service personnel and consumers - derived again from the largely intuitive feeling that there might be notable differences in interpretation between each of these players in the tourism experience. This was sustained through an awareness of the considerable academic study of quality gaps principally by Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry (1990) - although no attempt was made to follow their methodology in the satisfaction field as opposed to the quality field. The three perspectives were additionally considered to complement one another from a methodological point of view as they could act as one check on the authenticity of the various perspectives.

Importance

The consideration of each of these essential components of the research problem seemed to be *important*. They were thought to make a valuable contribution to the knowledge of *academics* and *practitioners*. In combination, too, the components of the research problem were deemed to be *original* in scope. Accordingly, the research appeared to meet the criteria of '*relevance*' - one of the key criteria that Hammersley (1992 : 72-77) recognised in order to judge research.

Furthermore, much of the primary and secondary research allied to existing practical knowledge only served to support an initial assertion that the study could have a wider application beyond long-haul, inclusive tours. Such tours could well be viewed as a *microcosm* of tourism in general - although despite the attractiveness of such support

the researcher was aware that such an expansive claim fell within the realm of interpretation and was not beyond reasonable doubt.

Rubin and Rubin (1995 : 52) succinctly stressed the need for a topic to be important: 'You don't want to get done with your research and then find out that no one is interested in what you found out but yourself. As part of doing a design, you should ask yourself, why is this topic important? To whom would it be important? How could the results be used? What are the broader concerns of which this research is a part?' Each of these questions could reasonably be answered positively in regard to the research problem that was posed.

Personal experience

From a personal point of view the choice of research problem also appeared to be a sensible choice. The research was driven in the first instance by the researcher's *practical experience* of long-haul tourism both as a consumer and also as a tour leader of walking expeditions on Mt. Kenya during the early 1980s. The work on these mountain treks provided some insights into the reality of tour organisation from the supply side. On the other hand, the specialised niche that such treks represented did not allow the researcher to become inculcated with the modus operandi of any large tour operator. Any possible infusion of bias because of a fixed corporate approach was avoided. Additionally, the opportunities provided by the chance to live for a period of time in the long-haul location of Kenya and to experience both directly and indirectly the type of tourism facility offered in an almost prototype long-haul tourism destination added an extra dimension to the initial understanding and formulation of the research problem. In fact, the credibility that was gained from the specific job experience, the experience as a consumer and the general life experience as a resident in Kenya (and by the mid 1980s in Israel) undoubtedly had a positive effect. This effect was not just on the period during which the research problem was in the process of being defined but also during the interviews with management and later (although this could not be foreseen at the time of the problem formulation) in the establishment of a special empathy with the tour leader in the field study.

Feasibility

Of course, there can never be any absolute certainty that a problem may feasibly be researched throughout the period of the study. The problem needed to be resolved, albeit without compromising the credibility of the research, within the limitations set by

monetary and time support from Oxford Brookes University. This support could have been withdrawn and certainly there was a need for some creative husbanding of research monies in order to fund field study in Malaysia. At least the CS/D issue seemed set as a substantive one for the 1990s so that the more laboured progress possible in part-time research was to some extent allayed.

A rather more worrying scenario at the outset was the possibility that the industry would deny any form of *access* to the researcher. There were certainly some doom-sayers in the academic community who actively proposed the rapid demise of the research on these grounds. This occasioned the production of a short, uncomplicated, convenience sample postal survey of tour operators (Appendix 1). The researcher adhered to the tenets of good practice in postal research but although some of the questions on this survey were developed as a consequence of the nascent understanding of the literature on satisfaction it was decided not to attempt an analysis and interpretation of the results. This would have run counter to the rationale behind the postal survey as well as the researcher approach, confirmed and strengthened during the research, that placed an emphasis on direct contact with management, customer service personnel and consumers. Rather, the *key* intention was to establish whether the tour operators would be interested in joint research with the then Oxford Polytechnic on the measurement of CS/D. From over 20 replies and a 45% response rate - generally recognised as a favourable response to academic enquiry - there were only a few companies that showed no interest whatsoever in collaboration. This was considered to be most encouraging. It was assumed that *some* of the positive (or not entirely negative) respondents - together with other operators who were not a part of the convenience sample - could be persuaded in due course to provide access to the researcher. This was certainly proven to be the case during the period of the management interviews - although with regard to the case study in the field it was eventually decided not to seek access approval from management (see 4.5.3). In sum, each of the feasibility issues mentioned by Rubin and Rubin (1994 : 54-55) - time / divided time, finance and access - appeared to be manageable in the pursuit of the chosen research problem.

4.0.4 Review of related research

Pre-understanding

The researcher formulated a view that it was essential to develop the study based on a sound consideration of the existing practical and theoretical understanding. It was

recognised that the management interviews - both exploratory and extended - would not be repeatable at a later period of the research. Therefore, preparation was vital and an initial literature search based on trade and academic sources had been carried out even prior to the exploratory interviews. Certainly the extended management interviews were controlled, albeit flexibly, within an established cover guide that was based on the literature search and the exploratory interviews. Likewise, it was inconceivable in this research that the participant observation field study could proceed without pre-understanding from literature and the management interviews. From this point of view the research did not follow what could be conceived as the approach of more purist grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin (1990 : 23)) although at the same time the researcher *was* aware that pre-understanding could be prescriptive in the framework that it established. In the terms of the influential early ethnographer Malinowski (1922 : 8-9) the pre-understanding amounted to 'foreshadowed problems' rather than 'pre-conceived ideas':

'Preconceived ideas are pernicious in any scientific work, but foreshadowed problems are the main endowment of a scientific thinker, and these problems are first revealed to the observer by his theoretical studies'.

Accordingly, there *were* moments during the primary research when the framework was broken or modified in order to encompass other views apart from the accepted orthodoxies. For instance, in the participant observation it became clear that a tour leader might choose not to analyse consumer CS/D - a view most certainly not suggested in the literature review. Agar (1986 : 20-32) would consider this as an example of 'breakdown' within a 'schema' - a unit of storage with a specific content or theme - which required 'resolution', clarification and enlightenment or 'coherence'.

Eisenhardt (1989 : 544) encapsulated the approach of this researcher with regard to the review of related research and research methodology - both at the initial stage of the research and throughout its course:

'An essential feature of theory building is comparison of the emergent concepts, theory, or hypotheses with the extant literature. This involves asking what is this similar to, what does it contradict, and why. A key to this process is to consider a broad range of literature.'

Pizam (1994 : 94) expressed the view that in planning the review of the related research :

'... the investigator should search and select those studies that provide a foundation for the proposed project and discuss these studies in sufficient detail to understand their relevance.'

It is considered that this has been done in the literature review. For example, the overview of the CS/D antecedents outlined the range of theory that has emerged from

psychology linked to CS/D - whilst adding the caution that the specific, empirical tradition of such research in controlled environments together with the over-emphasis on product-based consumption behaviour placed some limitations on the acceptance of the theory in a tourism context.

Multidisciplinary perspectives

Of course, the consideration of a broad range of literature was not confined to business, management and (particularly) psychology but spilled over into many other disciplines such as sociology and anthropology with regard both to methodology and subject content.

For example, the researcher revised the opinions and arguments suggested progressively by the tourist typologies of Cohen (1972), Smith (1989) and Urry (1991); MacCannell (1973) and the tourist quest for authenticity as a counter to the inauthenticity of modern life; Gottlieb (1982) who considered that the view of the vacationer was 'authentic' whatever the view of the social scientist - the emic as opposed to the etic approach; and Turner (1969) from whose work the idea of a tourist *rite de passage* was espoused with its three separate stages of social and spatial separation, liminality and reintegration. During the stage of liminality the individual in a group, no longer bound by the structured certainties of daily life was supposed to experience feelings of *communitas* with others in the group - a concept which became apparent in the reality of the participant observation.

Such inter-linkage of psychology, sociology and anthropology not to mention geography and a range of business aspects such as marketing and human resource management was perhaps inevitable. Nash and Smith (1991 : 22) concluded that: 'At present it is not always easy to distinguish some of these (anthropological) contributions from those of other social scientists. The discipline's boundaries are not well developed where tourism is concerned, and it is indeed possible to see a good deal of disciplinary overlap, especially with sociology...'.

The antecedents of CS/D that were generated from psychology and the views of the various lead figures from sociology and anthropology were clearly known to the researcher prior to the primary research. This was a chosen necessity. In the same way as the researcher attempted to shuttle between observation and experience during the participant observation (4.5.4) the researcher also sought to shuttle between the role of tourism lecturer and that of a deliberately naive individual with a lot of curiosity. The

developing primary work was only truly fused with the theory in the later periods of analysis and interpretation - Strauss and Corbin (1990 : 52) called this 'supplementary validation'. Evidence of this comes from the field notes - the supposed antecedents of satisfaction *were* sometimes mentioned in the substantive notes and the analytic memos but in most cases this followed on from usage of a term such as 'expectation' by a consumer. There were few references by name or inference to the sociological or anthropological theorists. Parallels with their work were allowed to *emerge* - mainly in the analysis and interpretation stage after the primary fieldwork.

4.0.5 Definition of concepts, variables, and hypotheses

The definition of concepts and categories (groups of concepts) used in this study clearly relied in the first instance on their identification. The initial generation was based on the literature search and the personal experience both as a tour leader and as a consumer - so called *a priori* concepts. Later generation depended on the careful reading of the management interview fieldnotes and the participant observation fieldnotes - *emergent concepts*. Although there were a range of definitions offered for some of the concepts within the literature the researcher held the initial view that these should be treated in the mould suggested by Blumer (1954 : 7) of 'sensitizing concepts' rather than 'definitive concepts':

'Where definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitizing concepts merely suggest directions along which to look.'

With regard to the setting of an hypothesis - a proposition that is stated in testable form and that predicts a particular relation between two or more variables - it must be said that whilst the research started with a number of clear *questions* it did not start with an *hypothesis* to test. This last, an apparent heresy for many researchers, was in line with much research of the ethnographic kind and has been strongly defended not only by ethnologists such as Agar (1986) but also by behavioural psychologists such as Helson (1964 : 8):

'Philosophers of science often assert that experiments are never undertaken unless an explicit hypothesis is being tested. This generalisation confuses the ideal with the real, for a large number of experiments are constantly reported without any underlying rationale. To formulate hypotheses requires a certain amount of knowledge which may not be available until after the observations have been made'.

4.0.6 Selection of research design

Research design has been categorised under three headings - exploratory, descriptive and causal. Alongside this categorisation it has often been inferred that exploratory and descriptive design are subordinate in their role to causal explanation. However, this view has been challenged - description involves choices and such choices are guided by the paradigm, access and preunderstanding so that there is no *description* without *analysis* and *interpretation* (Gummesson (1994 : 75-76)).

The classic range of purposes for *exploratory design* include familiarisation with the problem and clarification of the concepts - clearly in evidence during the exploratory management interviews.

However, the extended management interviews and the case study that involved the use of participant observation - as well as the later consumer interviews - more clearly belong to *descriptive design*.

Descriptive design allows the researcher to make specific predictions and discover relations between variables in a natural setting - away from the artificial environment that belongs to causal design. This was the obvious rationale of the participant observation but was also the rationale of the management interviews which were deliberately conducted on the premises of the tour operators in order to allow observation in the work setting. No interviews were conducted in conferences or other meeting places. Likewise, the consumer interviews were held either in the homes of the interviewees or in other suitable settings chosen in agreement with the consumer. The objective in all cases was the compilation of descriptive information, not necessarily facts, as a basis for analysis and interpretation.

Of course, the whole *raison d'être* of causal or experimental design is the establishment of relationships between one or more independent variable and one or more dependent variable. Such causal design was rejected by the researcher for a range of reasons. Essentially, both field and laboratory experiments were felt to impose an element of control in an artificial environment that was not considered to be suitable for the resolution of the particular research problem and research questions. Moreover, the view of the researcher was that perhaps a concentration on *verstehen* (understanding) was more important than the search for causal explanation.

4.0.7 Selection of data collection techniques

Change through time.

Whilst the research problem remained intact the proposed data collection techniques that were envisaged at the outset of the research were rather more prone to change. Such modification was not related to expediency. Rather, they related to a serious consideration of altered requirements with the benefit of additional information and analysis from primary and secondary sources as the research investigation was developed.

For example, at the outset it was envisaged that the research might involve an *industry-wide survey* of the questions raised by the research problem. The exploratory management interviews caused the researcher to query the wisdom of this approach (see 4.1.1). Also, although industry contacts were carefully cultivated throughout the study the researcher reversed a previously determined intention to request access to the database of one or other tour operator - the assumed need for the database was the generation of members for *consumer focus groups*. Apart from the likelihood that the tour operator(s) would consider the release of names from a consumer data base only on the *quid pro quo* of involvement with the focus group and any future development of the study (through to publication) it also seemed that such focus groups could way-lay the drive for a compact, systematic study. Likewise, the original intention to study specific *parts* of the vacation sequence in isolation - prior to the study of the *whole* vacation sequence - was also passed over because it was felt that the research would be in danger of splitting into so many disaggregated parts that it would not be possible to generate an aggregated whole. There were attractive field research examples generated in *parts* of the vacation sequence by the likes of Folkes (1984a) at the airport or Bitner (1990) in travel agencies. However, the key requirement of the researcher was to weld the various parts of the research together - careful thought through time suggested that such welding could not truly be accomplished by separate studies with some inappropriate and forced joins. Therefore, the emphasis was placed on *holism* rather than *reductionism*. This incidentally placed an *extra* onus on the creation of a purposeful participant observation field study of the *whole* vacation sequence - each methodological and practical issue was raised and discussed and mulled over on innumerable occasions. Although no researcher can be *entirely* sure of the correctness of the methodological decisions vis-a-vis alternative methodological decisions it was genuinely felt that the concentration on the whole vacation sequence

and the rejection of extraneous material from part vacation sequences was beneficial to the resolution of the research problem.

Obviously, the techniques that were eventually settled on - interviews and participant observation - will be discussed in depth later from a methodological point of view. At this point it is worth drawing attention to the iceberg metaphor of Gummesson (1991 : 30-31) - the two techniques mentioned allowed the researcher not only to set foot on the iceberg of understanding but also to get under the surface of understanding:

'...qualitative (informal) interviews and observation provide the best opportunity for the study of processes. They have only been partially accepted as scientific methods in management although they seem to meet with increasing sympathy. A step that will take the researcher/consultant further is the application of participant observation...'

Qualitative emphasis.

One clear point that may be gleaned from this schedule outlining the progress of research through time is the emphasis on a *qualitative* rather than a *quantitative* approach - an emphasis forged from an *academic and practical commitment* rather than an *ideological commitment*. Again specific aspects of the qualitative vs. quantitative debate that are related to the choice of specific qualitative techniques are discussed in the appropriate place (see 4.2.1 / 4.5.1). However, from under a welter of writing it is worth outlining the version of qualitative research that most closely corresponds to the version adopted and adapted in this research - the researcher's chosen 'paradigm platform' (Gummesson (1994 : 15). Based in most essentials on the overall stance of Hammersley (1992 : 159-172) the character of qualitative research expressed in this research study reflected a preference for *words* rather than numbers - whether spoken by management and consumers in interviews or consumers and the tour leader in the participant observation - with the potential disbenefit of a loss of *precision*. It also reflected a preference for *naturally* occurring data in the form of semi-structured interviews and participant observation rather than more *artificial* structured interviews, laboratory or field control with the potential benefit of reduced '*reactivity*' or *influence* on the people studied; *interactionism* in interviews and participant observation; and an attempt at neither a rigidly *deductive* or *inductive* approach. As Hammersley stated (1992 : 168-169):

'Indeed, it seems to me that all research involves both deduction and induction in the broad senses of those terms; in all research we move from ideas to data and from data to ideas... We can never entirely escape our own assumptions about the world. And even in face-to-face contact with people with whom we share a lot, we are not given knowledge that is necessarily beyond reasonable doubt....

we cannot but rely on constructing hypotheses, assessing them against experience and modifying them where necessary. This is true whether we engage in hypothesis-testing in a formal, explicit and narrow way that involves subjecting hypotheses to crucial tests; or whether we adopt a more informal and broader approach in which we sacrifice some of the sharpness of the test in order to allow more of our assumptions to be thrown open to challenge.'

The general stance of the researcher away from positivism did not preclude the use of theory based on traditional scientific methods in *all* the stages of the research investigation - it seemed better to have *some* empirical evidence, even if there might be some flaws in its generation, than no empirical evidence at all. This accounts for the attention paid to traditional psychological theory (ch. 2) and the use made of such theory in the early development of potential antecedents of satisfaction. However, it did preclude any attempt to generate multi-variate parametric statistical data sets from the field or even the use in the field of hand operable non-parametric factor analysis derived from repertory grids and semantic scales - hardly surprising given the interactionist and non-positivistic approach adopted in the management interviews. Potter and Coshall (1988 : 65) advocated hand factor analysis as an appropriate sociopsychological method in tourism research but their parallel critique of multivariate statistical techniques seemed also to apply to their chosen approach: 'Many investigators have had the experience of putting large data sets through the 'black box' of computers, only to lose all contact with, and feel for, the initial data.'

It was accepted that a discussion with regard to polar opposites - qualitative vs. quantitative, words vs. numbers, natural settings vs. artificial settings, inductive approaches vs. deductive approaches, as well as meanings vs. behaviour, natural science vs. social science, idealism (the rejection of the possibility of representing reality) vs. realism was counterproductive. Perhaps herein lies the key to this particular study - flexibility within an established framework. The researcher was aware of strengths and weaknesses of each methodology and so recognised the point of Silverman (1993 : 2) that '...methodologies cannot be true or false, only more or less useful.' From such a perspective Cohen (1988 : 29-30) was able to recognise that whilst sociologists of tourism had given the qualitative approach scant consideration '... the most significant and lasting contributions also have been made by researchers who employed an often loose qualitative methodology'.

This research considered closely and acted on each of the summary rules of qualitative research identified by Silverman (1993 : 197-211).

- Avoid choosing between polar oppositions.

- Consider alternative approaches.
- Contextual awareness.
- Establish authenticity of conversations.
- Search for many-sided explanation.

Perhaps, however, one of the most appealing elements of the so-called qualitative method was that the researcher felt comfortable with the research approach. The researcher associated with the requisite skills outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990 : 18) for doing qualitative research - after all qualitative research is both a skill and a philosophy. In order to do qualitative research it is necessary:

'... to step back and critically analyse situations, to recognise and avoid bias, to obtain valid and reliable data, and to think abstractly. To do these, a qualitative researcher requires theoretical and social sensitivity, the ability to maintain analytical distance while at the same time drawing upon past experience and theoretical knowledge to interpret what is seen, astute powers of observation, and good interactional skills.'

4.0.8 Selection of subjects

A full account of the selection of subjects with regard to each of the information collection techniques occurs later in the relevant place. No extra benefit can be drawn from a general discussion at this point.

4.0.9 Data processing and information analysis - theory and theorising

Theory and theorising

Perhaps all researchers ought to be as candid as Hughes (1994 : 40):

'I have to confess that my own system of developing analyses from field notes was rather less a self-conscious attempt to analyse and rather more an attempt to write something coherent'.

However, throughout each stage of the primary research an attempt was made to follow the tenets of good practice with regard to data processing and information analysis. Howard and Sharp (1983) outlined some common purposes of analysis such as description, generation of empirical relationships, explanation and prediction - although they more or less denied the possibility of explanation or prediction in the social sciences and argued that outside mathematics it is not impossible to prove explanations and predictions completely, merely render them more probable. Agar (1986 : 16) certainly agreed on this last point and suggested that the social science of

ethnography is less interested in knowing exactly what comes next (*prediction*) and more interested in '*understanding*' what just happened. This has some relevance to the present study.

Howard and Sharp (1983) next considered that analysis involved the ordering and structuring of primary and secondary data to produce knowledge. In the description phase this involved concept formulation and classification. The generation of empirical regularities and relationships amongst data involved 'pattern recognition' - for example through the 'association' of two variables or through 'precedence relationships' which showed order, precedence or priority. *Such a bland summary of the role of analysis was useful but the researcher felt a need for a more comprehensive approach or blueprint and sought to de-mystify the process of analysis.* This had drawn Hammersley and Atkinson (1983 : 177) to comment that:

'The development of theoretical categories and models has often been treated as a mysterious process about which little can be said and no guidance given'.

Reality of analysis.

The researcher resisted the *complete* classification of the research into the bounds of *grounded theory* but nevertheless a clear awareness of the analytical procedures of grounded theory provided the basis of an associated approach - sceptics would doubt whether any research has wholly followed the system of analysis suggested by, say, Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990). Richards and Richards (1991 : 43), for example, reckoned that grounded theory was essentially adopted as an 'approving bumper sticker in qualitative studies'. However, Strauss and Corbin (1990 : 59) themselves warned that:

'...while we set these procedures and techniques before you, we do *not* at all wish to imply rigid adherence to them.'

The researcher attempted a *modified* version of coding - 'open coding', 'axial coding', 'selective coding' and 'process' - during the analysis of the extended interviews with management and consumers and also during the analysis of the participant observation. Through the 'open coding' described by Strauss and Corbin (1990 : 61-74) it was possible to probe the range of literature-derived and experience-derived conceptual 'categories'. The development of the categories in terms of their 'properties' and 'dimensions' also proved to be useful in the interviews - although there was a constant wariness to keep in touch with the data. Clearly there was not the opportunity to analyse the interviews on a line-by-line or paragraph-by-paragraph basis - the interviewer did not tape the interviews and so there were no detailed transcripts - but

nevertheless there *was* the opportunity to consider an entire interview (in the form of the field-notes and the written interview account sent to the interviewee). Fieldnotes from the participant observation provided the same opportunity. 'Theoretical sensitivity' was also pursued through occasional use of the 'flip-flop' technique (a concentration on dis-satisfaction as opposed to satisfaction); comparison with information about other service and non-service industry (from the literature and direct experience); and a heightened sense of doubt and dissent.

The framework for 'axial coding' (Strauss and Corbin (1990 : 96-115)) also proved to be useful in the reconstruction of the categories produced from the open codes. The same was true for 'selective coding' (Strauss and Corbin (1990 : 116-142)) - the descriptive narrative concerning CS/D.

Finally, the research problem was focussed at least in part on change through time and so there was a natural emphasis on 'process' - inherent in grounded theory. Particularly in the participant observation there was an attempt to capture and sequence change and movement with regard to CS/D. Strauss and Corbin (1990 : 142) stated that:

' By process we mean the linking of sequences of action/interaction as they pertain to the management of, control over, or response to, a phenomenon. This linking of sequences is accomplished by noting: (a) the change in conditions influencing action/interaction over time (b) the action/interactional response to that change (c) the consequences that result from that action/interactional response; and finally by (d) describing how those consequences become part of the conditions influencing the next action/interactional sequence. Change can be the consequence of planned action/interaction or it may occur as a result of *contingency*, an unanticipated and unplanned for happening that brings about change in conditions'.

This definitional framework proved to be a good practical guide for the interpretation of process.

Jorgensen (1989 : 107-111) produced a review of analysis, focussed on participant observation, that also outlined coding, sorting, sifting, constructing and reconstructing through looking for essential features, patterns, relationships, processes and sequences. This review seemed to share much in common with the approach of Strauss and Corbin (1990). However, beyond the stage of analysis Jorgensen (1989 : 111-116) pointed out that a researcher becomes more directly and explicitly involved in theory and theorising and suggested that the methodology of participant observation involved a number of different forms of theory and theorising. From the overall discussion in this chapter it will be seen that this research reaches out to the stage of theory and theorising not only through grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss

and Corbin (1990)), but also analytic induction (Mitchell (1983), Yin (1994)), sensitising concepts (Blumer (1954, 1969), *existential theorising* (Johnson (1975), Douglas (1976)) and *hermeneutics* (Agar (1986); Gummesson (1991)).

Other systems of analysis also provided insights such as Ritchie and Spencer (1994 : 173-194) who outlined a system that moved from the emergence of *a priori* and *emergent issues* and *analytical themes* through to *mapping and interpretation* - whilst nevertheless stressing the need for 'leaps of intuition and imagination.'

Indeed, despite the apparently mechanistic approach of data processing and analysis and the researcher's wariness with regard to the mystification of this research stage the researcher was nevertheless in accord with Okely (1994 : 31-32):

'Writing and analysis comprise a movement between the tangible and the intangible, between the cerebral and the sensual, between the visible and the invisible. Interpretation moves from evidence to ideas and theory, then back again. There can be no set formulae, only broad guidelines, sensitive to specific cases.'

Finally, it should be noted that the perspective of the analysis straddled a range of disciplines - psychology, sociology, and (perhaps most obviously within the participant observation) anthropology. These were all bound within a management/business framework.

4.0.10 Practical rationale.

Despite the overtly academic rationale appropriate for doctoral research there was also a firm intention to maintain the essential relevance of the study at a practical management level.

Brent Ritchie (1994) was clear on the nature of the management situations that required each type of research. This thesis straddled aspects from each of the five 'research categories' suggested by Brent Ritchie (1994 :15) - but particularly 'policy research' and 'management research'.

'(Policy research) ...needs to provide well-defined but broad guidelines that serve to establish priorities to direct the organisation's activities. (Managerial research)... relate(s) to a specific important problem of limited scope for which management has need of additional information on which to base a decision.' (Brent Ritchie : 17).

Examples of each type of research will be argued specifically but will also be infused in to the text at appropriate points. Accordingly, analysis and interpretation of a practical management nature will relate to both broad strategic aspects of tourism behaviour with regard to CS/D in long-haul tourism and also more specific aspects that relate to the participant observation case-study - although such aspects also informed the broad strategic aspects.

4.0.11 Times Change

One contextual aspect that needs to be remembered at this stage with regard to the research is the change that has occurred through time since the start of the research. In general these have worked in favour of the research and, of course, the CS/D issue has remained of consequence throughout.

The researcher's knowledge and understanding of methodology, consumer behaviour and satisfaction both in general and also as related to the long-haul tourism industry inevitably developed as time progressed. This occurred as a consequence of both the expanding and deepening literature search as well as the primary research.

Management ideas in general also developed through the period of the research since managers may obviously be influenced by the climate of management thought. This was expressed in the academic and perhaps more particularly in the trade literature, and in both informal and formal discussion within meetings organised by the tourism trade and by the business community in general. These ideas may be interpreted and acted upon by managers themselves in the case of small organisations or else imposed as part of the prevailing management system in the case of managers in larger organisations. Also, by their own admission, the views of many of the managers who were interviewed sometimes developed right in front of the interviewer as they were forced to confront their conceptual understanding and practical management schema or framework with regard to consumer satisfaction.

Finally, there have also been some considerable shifts with regard to the development of academic theory - for example, whether admissible or not, satisfaction has increasingly been thought to stand at the apex of a consumer evaluation hierarchy (see 3.4.3).

4.1 Stage 1 Exploratory Management Interviews

4.1.1 Practical aims and relevant methodology findings

4.1.2 Further entry and progress

Following on from the general overview this section of the methodology deals in depth with the stage 1 exploratory management interviews. It includes in places more specific detail from the interviews than might normally be expected in a methodology. However, there is a clear logic for including such detail - the course of the primary research was fundamentally changed by the reality that the interviews revealed.

4.1.1 Practical aims and relevant methodology findings

The exploratory interviews were carried out from January 1993 - April 1993 in order to *resensitise* the researcher as regards background information on tour operation - for example, terminology, operations, current issues and so on; to allow a first perspective on *management thoughts* concerning CS/D and its measurement and to initiate *management contact*.

The early doubts among colleagues concerning access had driven the researcher to produce a convenience *postal questionnaire* of tour operators drawn from the TTG Directory 1992. The 45% response rate and 20 replies formed the basis of the forward contacts that were used in the *exploratory management interviews*. The researcher did not agonise over the final selection of management targets - sensitisation was the fundamental objective. However, two of the chosen five operators were more mass market in appeal and the remaining three were niche operators. Intuitively, this seemed to provide an illustrative cross-section of the long-haul operator sector.

The interviews were either in middle/senior management posts or at senior management / director level. Although the researcher produced a cover guide for the interviews this was used with much greater flexibility than in the subsequent extended management interviews.

Of course, the interviews were duly important in establishing contact - not so much because of future networking as for providing the researcher with the confidence that was necessary in order to deal with senior management / directors in the later more focussed and intense extended interview situations. General discussion on current

themes and operations and the clarification of terminology also allowed the later interviews to proceed with more effect. However, the most valuable information that emerged from the exploratory interviews related to the methods used in order to determine satisfaction. *This truly influenced the course of the research.*

Consumer Service Questionnaires (CSQ) emphasis

The exploratory interviews revealed that the most frequently occurring method was the formal systematic survey - customer service questionnaire (CSQ). This was in use at four of the five tour operators.

A blank sample of the CSQ at one of the more mass market operators was obtained and also short term access was granted to a summary of the computed returns for their 'Florida / America' and 'Worldwide' destination brands over the period April-June 1992 and July-September 1992. The CSQ itself was precise in its extraction of specific information regarding departure date, flight number, airline used, hotel name and location and so on; specifically requested a *satisfaction* rating on a four point scale for a number of flight attributes; requested a rating (this time not specified as a satisfaction rating), again on a four point scale, for hotel features and other features of the holiday; asked for information on previous experience with the operator and the likelihood of future booking; and collected a standard set of demographic and socio-economic information. There was also one question which requested a rating of overall satisfaction with the holiday.

Consideration of this CSQ and also the evidence of the returns suggested that it could perform a basic task competently and produce a set of understandable quantitative results. These showed, just as an example, that the overall satisfaction with the 'Florida / America' brand on 1071 returns from 15,717 customers was 3.45 on a 4-point scale and the overall satisfaction on the 'Worldwide' brand on 1073 returns was 3.49 on the same scale. Basic conclusions with statistical probabilities were drawn from such results. However, a persistent *subjective feeling* of the researcher was that the whole process was rather *superficial* and that the vast quantity of information that was produced and statistically analysed mostly served the need of the company to update data bases for future promotional activity. As a genuine exploration of satisfaction it merely glanced the surface and essentially consisted of customer perceptions regarding a variety of the most easily identified attributes.

Saleh and Ryan (1992 : 117) in a study of satisfaction in the hotel sector of the tourism industry highlighted the exact same problem with CSQs. In addition to the problems of low response and unrepresentative samples they stated that:

' It can be further contended that such questionnaires tend to emphasise physical attributes of the hotels, but a more important determinant of satisfaction is the expressive performance of procedures and the quality of interaction between staff and guests.'

Additionally, set within the time confines of all questionnaire research the CSQ could not delve into the *reasoning* behind the consumer responses and offered only the most limited space for elaboration. Clearly, despite investment in the production, distribution, collection, computation and analysis of CSQs there was a need for other methods. For their part this was implicit in the additional stated use made by the tour operator of sample telephone interviews, the analysis of consumer letters and sample consumer focus groups. Focus group work with consumer service personnel was also carried out, as became obvious from short term access to the report of the tour operator on a focus group among senior bookings clerks from selected travel agents.

A subsequent evaluation of the literature on focus groups suggested that perhaps such an approach and other less obviously quantifiable approaches would be the more liable to bring forth the detailed elaboration on consumer satisfaction that was truly required.

However, at this point it is important to note that the consideration of the CSQ from the operator above set in train a thought process which eventually rejected the use of a satisfaction survey (modified and elaborated or otherwise by the researcher). This was the only operator from the exploratory management interviews that the researcher re-approached for a later extended interview - in this the *interviewee* largely confirmed that such surveys were rather *empty of any particularly deep meaning* beyond, say, the basic gratification that there was a statistical improvement in some specific feature or other which had been chosen as the special focus of management effort and activity. The prior thought process and analysis that was required in order to develop a programme of action that addressed a special feature was not notably enhanced by evidence from the survey approach.

Interview and beyond at a niche operator

Many of these initial researcher impressions were compounded by the exploratory interview at one of the niche operators. The interviewee, a managing director,

physically opened and viewed the most recently received CSQs during the interview (Appendix 2). His key interest was in just one of the questions:

'On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate your X----- holiday in terms of general satisfaction with both pre-holiday service you received from X----- and the overall quality of the holiday itself.'

This is a summary satisfaction score - maybe even a score of *attitude* rather than *satisfaction*. Clearly, the managing director was keen that this score was as near to the top value as possible. For the moment, perhaps, one can lay aside the specific debate around the value of such summary scores and also the common but imprecise use of the terms satisfaction and quality as if they were interchangeable (see 3.5.3). The key point from observation and questioning in the interview was that after a cursory view of the summary score the managing director primarily used the CSQ as a means to extract the name and address of the consumers. This, of course, was a completely legitimate use of any such questionnaire and, indeed, could be thought of as both necessary and vital for the continued sustainability of the company. Tour operators are still one step removed from their consumers since in most instances bookings are received via the intermediary of the travel agent who has no need to divulge information regarding customer name and address to the tour operator. However, the implication of the observed approach was that the operator had foregone the opportunity even to evaluate the limited information that was received in survey form. This might say something negative about the perceived view by the tour operator of the merit of such survey techniques - even when the operator is one step removed from the booking process and consequently in need of information; or it might say something about the logistical problems of computing and analysing survey information once it has been collected; or it might say something positive about the ability of niche operators to remain close to their consumers by means other than CSQs - again even when they are one step removed from most of those consumers at the booking stage.

The researcher slowly came to the considered viewpoint, reinforced during the later extended management interviews, that each of the three options above was feasible. *Importantly, however, it was clear that experienced management in the field was cautious and sceptical about the interpretation of practical and conceptual issues to do with satisfaction from CSQs - and CSQs that could hardly be described as amateurish even if they were not ideal in their construction.*

Although the CSQs of these operators relate back to the years 1992 /1993 there is no evidence that the basis for management scepticism has altered through time - the 1997/98 generation of CSQs have not developed noticeably from their earlier

counterparts and indeed the CSQ used by the ground operator in the participant observation case study most certainly did fall into the 'amateur' category.

Easterby-Smith et al (1991 : 32) gave a pragmatic and relevant summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the quantitative approach represented by CSQs:

'... the main strengths are that: they can provide wide coverage of the range of situations; they can be fast and economical; and, particularly when statistics are aggregated from large samples, they may be of considerable relevance to policy decisions. On the debit side, these methods tend to be rather inflexible and artificial; they are not very effective in understanding processes or the significance that people attach to actions; they are not very helpful in generating theories; and because they focus on what is, or what has been recently, they make it hard for the policy-maker to infer what changes and actions should take place in the future.'

The researcher viewpoint was given further credence by a fortuitous probe to the managing director of the niche operator above concerning the whereabouts of the completed CSQ returns once the consumer names and addresses had been added to the database. *The CSQs were simply bundled together and placed in a cupboard.*

4.1.2 Further entry and progress

Additional impetus for the emerging thoughts on the methodology came as a result of the permission that was given during the exploratory interview to return to the offices of the niche operator and study a batch of the CSQ returns (149 in total) for the period October 1992 - March 1993. This was done on the proviso that they were not removed from the premises of the company.

The CSQ itself (Appendix 2) consisted of many of the attribute based features which had been covered in the CSQ of the mass tour operator - hotels, flights and ancillary services were rated, for example, on a 5-point scale from 'excellent' through to 'very poor'. The raw data present in the returns could have been cross tabulated in order to discover whether party size and age group (Q.10), say, was correlated in any way with overall satisfaction/quality rating (Q.9). However, the temptation to follow up on such possibilities was resisted due to the exploratory nature of the research at that stage and the consideration that if such links were later deemed to be important they could be more accurately established by means of a researcher developed, custom-built CSQ devised with a view to computer analysis (such analysis had not been discounted at that stage).

Rather, the CSQ returns of the niche operator were used in order to give an initial, exploratory check on the practical usage and flexibility of the early literature search which had suggested that general consumer satisfaction could be influenced by a variety of antecedents - *expectations, performance, disconfirmation, attribution, equity and emotion*. It was noted that the CSQ of the niche operator offered considerably more scope than the CSQ of the mass tour operator for consumer comments - each of the first three questions asked for 'further comments' and the fourth and fifth questions on particular likes and dislikes also asked for an open-ended response. These latter questions, as an aside, were in essence employing a simplistic form of the critical incident technique - a technique which had already presented itself as potentially useful in the literature. Accordingly, some particular attention was attached to these qualitative responses and to the links that could be drawn to the existing theory regarding the antecedents of satisfaction.

Classification of the open ended responses by antecedent was broadly feasible although the exercise revealed that explicitly - within the limitations of the base CSQ - consumers were focussing their satisfaction judgements largely on expectations and performance. It was possible to identify equity, attribution and emotion antecedents but these were considerably under-represented compared to expectations and performance. *This suggested that either they were less important as antecedents or else that they were not identified by the chosen methodology and remained suppressed.* It also proved impossible to identify comments which could clearly be classified as confirmation/disconfirmation after a comparison of expectation and performance. Therefore, this exercise, successful up to a point, once again suggested that another technique was required in order to explore the supposed antecedents of satisfaction in depth and to determine their relevance or otherwise within a tourism context. From this point onward the possible use of focus groups and participant observation started to be considered

As an additional final point in this section it can be mentioned that work at both the mass operator and the niche operator on which this chapter has concentrated - and also at the other mass operator and niche operators - illustrated a further purpose of on-site interviews encapsulated by Kvale (1996):

'Just hanging out in the environment where the interviews are to be conducted will give an introduction to the local language, the daily routines, and the power structures, and so provide a sense of what the interviewees will be talking about.'

Hanging out and yet systematically browsing through completed CSQs provided opportunities for observation and thought that positively advanced the course of the

research in a manner only previously hinted at in a few research texts and in anecdotal evidence from other researchers.

4.2 Stage 2 Extended Management Interviews

4.2.1 Interview design - philosophy and outline practice

4.2.2 Pre understanding

4.2.2 Practical organisation:

Following the exploratory interviews it was decided that a series of extended management interviews was a pre-requisite for the development of the research. A literature search established the practical reality of conducting this research and also extended knowledge on the supposed antecedents of CS/D and other aspects that might be discussed in the interviews.

The following account describes and analyses the role of the extended management interviews within the methodology - from the philosophy behind the adoption of an interactionist approach through to specific practical organisation and analysis.

4.2.1 Interview design - outline practice and philosophy

Philosophy

The researcher favoured the qualitative approach of the *interactionist* rather the *positivist* - even if with modifications. This approach was chosen, as elsewhere in this research, from a practical rather than a dogmatic standpoint.

With specific regard to interviews it is crucial to understand the reasoning behind the adoption of this approach. The positivist would argue that interviews are required in order to generate data which will hold independently of the research setting, the researcher / interviewer and the interviewee. The data, according to Silverman (1993) may be in the form of facts, beliefs about facts, feelings and motives, standards of action, present or past behaviour, and conscious actions. Positivists such as Sellitz (1964) necessarily follow a structured approach with a standardised protocol.

Easterby-Smith (1991) summarised and categorised the key features of the positivist paradigm. On a 'philosophical level' the basic belief of the positivist is that the world is external and objective, the observer is independent, and science is value free. On a

'social level' the focus of the researcher is on facts, there is a search for causality and fundamental laws, phenomena are reduced to their simplest elements and hypotheses are formulated and tested. On a 'technical level' the emphasis is on the operationalisation of concepts so that they can be measured and tested with large samples.

However, positivist interviews have recently met with considerable criticism and questioning. In sum, it is often agreed that they are inflexible and do not allow the exploration of feelings and motives as adequately as in interviews which are designed through the interactionist approach. Furthermore, commentators in a range of disciplines have often commented on the optimistic assumptions that are made by positivists regarding the reasoning and language abilities of interviewees vis-a-vis researchers.

The positivist approach contrasts with the interactionist approach. The core idea of the interactionist paradigm is that reality is socially constructed rather than objectively determined. Interviews are more unstructured and open-ended and the researcher / interviewer and interviewee interact. No fixed sequence of questions is assigned and interviewees may raise issues that are not contained in the schedule, such as it is, of the researcher.

Relevantly, Hammersley and Atkinson (1983:126) stated that:

'Interviews must be viewed, then, as social events in which the interviewer (and for that matter the interviewee) is a participant observer ... Interview data, like any other, must be interpreted against the background of the context in which they were produced.'

This was essentially the stance, too, of Mishler (1991) who vehemently but constructively attacked standard interview practice. Mishler (1991 : 131-132) favoured an approach that considered research interviews as speech events in which there was a joint construction of meaning - often through the analysis of stories. Meaning should be placed in context and the respondents should be empowered.

'Yielding control to interviewees of the flow and content of the interview, entering into a collaborative relationship, attending to what and how interviewees may learn from their efforts to respond meaningfully to questions within their own worlds of experience... all these 'research methods' radically alter the standard definition of a researcher's roles and aims.'

Kvale (1996:125) succinctly summarised the overall approach:

'The interaction is neither as anonymous and neutral as when a subject responds to a survey questionnaire, nor as personal and emotional as a therapeutic interview.' (db emphasis).

Of course, interactionism has also attracted its critics. It is argued that open-ended interviews do indeed exert control on interviewees, albeit different from that of structured interviews, so that the interviewees may feel obliged to talk when confronted with a passive or semi-passive researcher. Furthermore, such interviews do not preclude the possibility that the interviewee's experiences may lack meaning and authenticity. Finally, Denzin (1970 : 133-138) suggested a range of other problems that may distort the responses of interviewees - the context of the interview / the relative status of the researcher and interviewee / the difficulty of penetrating private worlds of experience / the problems of 'volatile', 'fleeting' relationships to which respondents have little commitment and so can 'fabricate tales of self that can belie the actual facts' / the problem of self-presentation especially early in the interview ... and perhaps others.

Other intervening work in a tourism context during hands-on experience of structured interviewing for a number of research projects, even research projects that did not have feelings and motivations at their core, confirmed the previously held attitude towards the limitations of a non-interactionist approach.

Accordingly, although due and fresh consideration was given to the positivist approach when faced with both a new set of research questions and a new context it was decided that the interactionist approach would be favoured for the management interviews - and, indeed, other subsequent primary research.

The early exploratory interviews also helped to confirm this decision. This was because in their interactionist form, chosen at that stage more on hunch rather than a meticulously considered, objective, strategic rationale, the interviews were deemed to be successful in the achievement of their exploratory objectives. Moreover, the content that emerged from this interactionist process also pointed toward the need for research that employed a broader brush than the narrow confines of the structured questionnaire and positivism.

Outline practice

However, although the researcher followed an interactionist approach the qualifying word *favoured*, as employed above, is used advisedly. An attempt was made to study

and incorporate where possible the strengths of positivism and to be aware of the problems (or challenges) of interactionism. It is possible to outline some of the adjustments that were made in order to conform with the concerns of positivist writers such as Sellitz (1964) and Denzin (1970).

Importantly, for example, the interviews were set-up by following a *standardised protocol* with regard to initial contact, subsequent confirmation, choice of interviewee, and correspondence concerning the interview subject matter, timing, and presumed length. The interview location was without exception on the premises of the interviewees. The interviews were each conducted according to a pre-determined, although not inflexible, schedule or cover guide (Appendix 3 Document C) which had been developed from the literature, the exploratory interviews and general awareness of the tourism business and long-haul inclusive tour sector both as a provider and consumer. In the words of Kvale (1996: 105) such a '*craftsmanlike*' approach bypassed both '*rigid formalism*' and '*naive spontaneity*'. Although not taped the interviews were immediately recorded on paper using the cover guide as a framework. This record was stored for future reference whilst a more comprehensible but unexpurgated account of the interview (although excluding an 'observations' section) was sent within seven days to the interviewee in order to check on accuracy. On the occasion that this check did not bring forward a response a second and obviously identical account was mailed to the interviewee.

Such a standardised protocol was important in the establishment of *reliability*. Of course, unlike in a structured interview it was not possible to follow the rules and taboos of Sellitz (1964) but neither was it considered desirable - the within interview phase of the interview protocol was conducted more on the lines of the interactionist approach. There is no denying that this presented its own challenges. In particular, as alluded to above the researcher was keen not to introduce unnecessary elements of bias, coloured by prior knowledge and experience, and accordingly adopted a listening, carefully reactive stance. This was important even though it produced occasional qualms for the researcher - specifically, a too reactive stance, bordering on passivity could give an impression that the researcher was indeed devoid of knowledge and experience. This would also have been detrimental to the cause of the research as it was important to create and maintain the respect of the interviewees. The researcher acknowledged that there was a thin line to be trodden between passivity and impassivity, reaction and proaction. It would not be necessary to negotiate the thin line within a structured interview - but therein lay a strength as well as a weakness of a more flexible schedule. It was felt by the researcher that the thin line was indeed

successfully balanced as evidenced in the flow of the interviews, the coverage of the topics and the respect of the interviewees who invariably extended the allotted length of the interview, replied promptly, informatively and courteously to the interview accuracy check and frequently offered the opportunity of further contact with the future research.

From these considerations it should be apparent that many of the concerns of not only Sellitz (1964) but also Denzin (1970) have been addressed in an attempt to nullify the criticisms that the positivists level at the interactionists and to *integrate* where possible the strengths of the positivist approach with the strengths of the interactionist approach. This was entirely consistent with the conclusion of Gummesson (1991 : 173) who stated that:

'There are grounds for suspicion regarding those researchers and consultants who consider that they have found the ultimate method; there is no such method in operation today.'

In other words, a fixed philosophical stance is not useful compared to a flexible stance that responds to the research questions.

The practical evidence from the interviews, as outlined above, suggested that they could indeed be treated as straightforward reports relating to the external reality of management views. They did not just represent some form of symbolic interactionism in which the interviews revealed no more than the internal reality of the interviews themselves.

4.2.2 Pre understanding

Practical intuitive thought

At the time of the interviews the researcher envisioned that they would create the contacts that would allow later access to management, consumer service personnel and consumers in artificial research settings. The researcher had not yet determined a critical role for participant observation.

Importantly it was decided that it was impossible to conduct successful management interviews - in which the interviewees discussed the research questions and remained open for possible future research - without some considerable 'pre-understanding'. It was difficult to conceive that a satisfactory interview could have been conducted with time-pressed senior management in a profit motivated organisation without such pre-understanding. So, the interviews were conceived in part from the *exploratory*

interviews, in part from the *personal, practical work experience* and *consumer experience* of the researcher, in part from discussion with *academic contacts* and in part from the *literature search*.

The input of the *exploratory interviews* has been detailed (see 4.1).

Personal, practical work experience had notably consisted of a period spent as a leader of educational walking tours on Mt. Kenya in Africa as part of a job as curator of the Mt. Kenya glacier in the Mt. Kenya National Park. This job involved the pre-planning and delivery of 4 or 5 day expeditions to the walking summit of Mt. Kenya (17,000ft.) together with associated transport to and from Nairobi. Apart from an awareness of the ground-level logistics of such an activity this job gave first-hand experience of group leadership and group dynamics and an intuitive understanding of satisfaction within a tour group. Other similar work had been undertaken in Britain and Europe.

Consumer experience particularly related to an extensive tour around the USA with the then newly established 'Trekamerica' company. This was during the first year that the USA became accessible to comparatively budget travel in the wake of the establishment of the Laker Airlines Skytrain service. Trekamerica was set up by its founding director as a near clone of another USA trekking company - subsequent to a short period of clandestine consumer participant observation. The Trekamerica experience was new, invigorating and exciting and left a lasting impression with regard to the potential for satisfaction and dissatisfaction within adventure tour groups.

The *literature search* prior to the interviews was both wide ranging and deep - although this did not preclude the further widening and deepening of the search both during and after the interviews.

Practical intuitive thought and theory

Gummeson (1991 : 53) categorised 'preunderstanding' as follows:

'The term *preunderstanding* is used here in a wider sense than just *knowledge*; preunderstanding also implies a certain *attitude* and a *commitment* on the part of researcher/consultants. It involves their *personal experience* as an essential element in the process of analyzing information. Moreover, researcher/consultants must demonstrate *theoretical sensitivity* and be able to change their paradigm - their basic world view - if reality requires them to do so.'

Personal experience, commitment, attitude, and the quest for knowledge have been alluded to above. The researcher also paid particular attention during the interviews to the need for theoretical sensitivity. As Gummesson (1991 : 56) continued:

'Those who are able to balance on the razor's edge *use their pre-understanding but are not its slave.*'

In support of pre-understanding Gummesson (1991 : 69-70) concluded:

'A lack of preunderstanding means that the work of the researcher/consultant becomes liable to serious shortcomings and may indeed be misleading.... the researcher/consultant is often able to list a great number of factors and relationships in a certain problem area. What is considerably more difficult is to attach weights to these factors and relationships, that is, to decide on their relative importance and which to give priority....the researcher/consultant risks choosing a method for access that does not provide the opportunity for the informants to give relevant answers or reactions.... the researcher/consultant runs the risk of never being aware of the consequences of inadequate access and preunderstanding...'

Kvale (1996 : 95) also appeared to agree with this viewpoint and bemoaned the 'theoretical naivete' of many applied interview projects:

'A considerable part of any interview project should take place before the tape recorder is turned on for the first actual interview. This involves developing a conceptual and theoretical understanding of the phenomena to be investigated, to establish the base to which new knowledge will be added and integrated. The thematic understanding of the topic of the study - the 'what' - will further influence the 'how' of the study: the many decisions on method that must be made.'

Notwithstanding the technical point that this research did not involve the use of a tape recorder (see 4.2.3) the more central thrust of the argument by Kvale clearly represents the overall research position that was adopted. Thematic understanding or 'thematizing' (Kvale 1996 : 95) involves not only the questions 'what' and 'how' but also 'why' - that is, the purpose of the interviews. Specifically, the research interviews were empirical and yet framed - although not strait-jacketed - within a theoretical boundary thus offering the chance to add to both empirical and theoretical knowledge.

Accordingly, the interviews differed from the approach of pure grounded theory which attempts to develop empirically based theory through interviews (and observations) and from a position which might be considered to fit closely with the description of 'theoretical naivete'. For example, Rubin and Rubin (1995 : 63) stated that:

'In qualitative interviewing, theories emerge from the interviews, not as mere extensions of the academic literature. The theories reach for broader significance but remain firmly *grounded* (db emphasis) in the experiences and understanding of the interviewees.... if you start off with other

people's theories and only test them, you will not be able to see anything new; you may not be able to see what is out there. The theory you start with can operate as blinkers, limiting your vision. In qualitative interviewing, blinkers are not allowed. You have to be free to follow your data where they lead.'

However, in the same source, Rubin and Rubin later mentioned that the interviewer should show an understanding of the factual content of an interview and also an empathy with the interviewee. Such requirements would naturally be made *more* difficult without pre-understanding. It seems that grounded theory can be modified from the stance recognised by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983 : 22) as an 'over-reaction to positivism'.

In line with this, a modified version of grounded theory found an echo in the thought process behind the interview design. Specifically, consider an accepted definition of grounded theory proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990 :23):

'A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge.'

One could argue that the pre-understanding of the researcher, given the comparative historical dearth of literature on service industries and tourism per se, amounted to a plurality of concepts and themes/categories rather than specific theories that were capable of slavish adaptation to consumer behaviour in tourism and even more specific adaptation to long-haul tour operation. To an extent, although the interviews started with a set of received themes/categories from the consumer behaviour literature, the intent of the researcher was to open up the categories within a tourism situation. This is perfectly compatible with grounded theory. Additionally, Strauss and Corbin (1990) argued that one should read and use published materials - both technical (research studies, theoretical and philosophical papers) and non-technical (documents, reports and so on) - during all phases of the research so that there is an interplay of reading literature and data analysis. Given such a view of grounded theory the position adopted in this research study, specifically here in the extended management interviews, does not seem to be incompatible with a modified grounded theory approach. Strauss and Corbin (1990: 53) gave a warning that was well heeded in the research:

'What you *do not* want to do is constantly run back to the published literature to find validation for everything that you are seeing. This would hinder progress and stifle creativity.'

The same applies to assumptions and experience which together with the literature search formed the core of pre-understanding in the view of Strauss and Corbin (1990: 76)

'Not that our assumptions, experience, and knowledge are necessarily bad, in and of themselves.... It's just that we have to challenge our assumptions, delve beneath our experience, and look beyond the literature if we are to uncover phenomena and arrive at new theoretical formulations.'

4.2.3 Practical organisation

Good practice

It is undoubtedly true that there has been a rapid recent growth in texts and journals on qualitative research methods. These now compensate for the relative dearth of texts that existed at the outset of the research. Kvale (1996: 9) acknowledged that:

'Until recently, the field of qualitative inquiry was fragmented into different disciplines with communication gaps across interpretative communities. With an absence of common literature, procedures and criteria, interviewers have to a large extent had to rely on their individual creativity. One consequence is that isolated researchers have invented small qualitative wheels over and over again.'

It has been informative to compare recent summary views of good practice with the view of good practice that was identified by the researcher prior to and during the extended management interviews.

For example, Kvale stated that it is experience that creates a good interviewer. This researcher can see a lot of truth in this statement. A whole range of aspects relating to the interviews improved as the interview programme progressed.

Furthermore, the core requirements of a good interviewer as expressed in Rubin and Rubin (1995) included intense listening, a respect for and curiosity about what people say, and a systematic effort to really hear and understand what people tell you. A partly intuitive awareness of these requirements lay at the core of much of the interview design. The same applies to the qualification criteria for the interviewer suggested by Kvale (1996: 148-149). Briefly, these criteria related to an extensive knowledge of the interview theme; a purposeful structure; clear questions; a gentle, tolerant manner; sensitive listening; open listening; controlled steering; a critical stance; an ability to remember; and an ability to interpret.

It is straightforward, logical and necessary for a full understanding of the research interviews to note their practical organisation and to acknowledge the criteria for good practice such as those of Kvale (1996). These are described and analysed below under the sub-headings 'set-up of interview', 'process of record' and 'interview sequence and analysis'.

Set up of interviews

Gummeson (1991 : 21- 49) describes *access* - the ability to get close to the object of study - as the researcher's number 1 problem. It is not just *physical access* that is important but also *mental access*:

'... how to understand what is actually happening in the setting, how to get people to describe it, how to observe it or how to experience it through the researcher's own involvement.'

Initial contact with the tour operators was made either by telephone or by letter (Appendix 3 Document A). Each method was equally successful in delivering the required interview. Both the initial telephone contact and/or the initial letter aimed to *briefly* introduce the research topic, the professional position of the researcher, and the researcher's willingness to conform flexibly with the interviewee's schedule. As the number of completed interviews increased the initial letter was altered slightly to justifiably suggest that the requested interview was necessary in order to fill a gap in ongoing research. It was intimated that the views of the interviewee were sought as a counterbalance to the views of others in a similar position in the industry - although in order to inspire immediate trust the names of other interviewee contributors were never divulged.

Occasionally, the telephone contact was useful only inasmuch as it confirmed a contact name and position. This was, however, most important information. A follow-up letter was then addressed to the target interviewee. Sometimes an interview was established without any problem or delay. At other times the whole process was rather more complicated. Invariably this was because the person that was considered to be most appropriate was temporarily out of the country and was accordingly unavailable.

Obviously, the final element of discretion with regard to the interview access rested with the management contact on the telephone or the addressee of the letter. However, the end result was that the issue of physical accessibility did not become a problem. The interviews were carried out over the period September 1994 - April 1995. Interviewee names were mainly gleaned from the Travel Trade Gazette (TTG)

Directory (1994) in which personnel were listed according to position. The researcher specifically aimed to interview either a managing director or a senior manager. In the latter case a request was made to interview a senior manager with responsibility for marketing. As the overall research progressed it was realised that a senior manager with human resource management responsibilities could also prove to be of equal worth to the study. *The essential criteria was that the chosen interviewee should be sufficiently positioned so as to effectively represent the tour operator concerned with regard to the interest of the research but should also be able to distinguish points where their own conceptual views or, say, perceptions of practice differed from those of the company.* This was necessary because it was not practical to interview more than one person within the company in order to form a consensus view. In reality, the feeling from the interviews was that there was a considerable overlap between personal views/perceptions of practice and the corporate views/perceptions of practice. As a balance, the concluding question in the interviews offered the opportunity to make some suggestions related to satisfaction that were not constrained by a company specific view. Both within the interview situation and in retrospect the answers of the interviewees were perceived to be *real* rather than *idealised* and *sanitised* - for example, interviewees did indeed criticise procedures regarding the analysis of CSQs and so, therefore, appeared to relate how operations worked in reality rather than how they were supposed to work. This was just one of many examples.

The list of interviewee's were drawn from an intuitive range of long-haul tour operations that were thought to be differentiated by scale of operation, portfolio focus or width, destination, consumer profile and needs - or a combination of the above. These included a market leader in terms of consumer numbers with a wide portfolio of products that included the long-haul product with an emphasis on sun and sea; another operator with a smaller number of consumers but a similar portfolio of products with a focus on long-haul sun and sea holidays; a smaller, more dedicated and up-market long-haul operator; and a number of small/medium scale 'soft adventure' operators with an increasing emphasis on long-haul - chosen as researcher interest focussed more on such a niche market (Appendix 3 Document B).

The success in gaining access through the procedures outlined above allowed the interviewer to forego any reliance on networked introductions which could have put pressure on the integrity of the interviews. A total of 13 interviews were completed. The researcher decided on the number of interviews using the established adage that one should continue to interview until one has found out what one needed to know and reached 'saturation point' or 'completeness' (Rubin and Rubin (1995 : 73.) An

emphasis was placed on quality rather than quantity. *There was never an intention to establish any form of statistical generalisation from the interviews and so the whole question of sample size and so on was not an issue.* Rather, the aim was to achieve what Yin (1994 : 10 (see 4.4.1)) described as '*analytical generalisation*' in which previously developed theory was used as a *template* against which to compare empirical results from the interviews.

With the exception of just one instance, the access was at an appropriate level within the company. Only one suitable operator, of all those contacted, was unable to suggest a mutually convenient time for the interview.

Finally, without exception the interviews were conducted on the premises of the operator concerned as it was correctly considered that this would add to the depth of knowledge and feel for the activities of the operator.

Process of record

The interviews were not taped. This approach was followed for a number of key reasons. First, from the exploratory interviews it was perceived that there was a *resistance* by management to such an approach and it was felt that to make such a request either prior to each interview or at the start of each interview would have had some strong negative consequences. In such an industry it was correctly assumed that the interviews would last between 30-60 minutes (a request was made in the introductory letter for an interview time of 30 minutes - a longer requested period would undoubtedly have led to reduced access) and so it was imperative that there was absolutely no impediment to the free flow of conversation from the very start of the interview. Additionally, Kvale (1996: 151) offered a defence for what might not in some quarters be considered to be particularly lengthy interviews:

'... current research interviews are often too long and filled with idle chatter. If one knows what to ask for, why one is asking, and how to ask, one can conduct short interviews rich in meaning'.

The second reason for not taping the interviews was that the tour operating industry is extremely *competitive*. Furthermore, the long-haul sector of the industry is a comparatively small sub-sector of the larger overall main sector. In many instances, there are *personal links* between the management players and it was very important not to give even the impression that there could be any transference of information about the activities of such players via the medium of the research interviewer. Clearly this impression would have been more obviously conveyed, in a world of even slight

business mistrust, if the interviewer had recorded the interview directly onto a tape. For the same reason the interviewer was scrupulous not to exchange any information about preceding interviews - other than to detail the company names of other operators that had agreed to be interviewed. It was keenly felt that such an approach was very instrumental in progressively but quickly building management confidence.

Third, a tape recorder could act as a *barrier to communication* even without a fear that the contents of the subsequent playback might be misused. There was no way of knowing for sure in advance as to whether the interviewee would feel comfortable with such an instrument.

Fourth, even though the questioning did not specifically aim to elicit company secrets - for example, of a financial kind - there was always the *chance* that the interviewee would stray, deliberately or not, into an area of management that was *sensitive*. The initial explanation of interviewer intent, brief but honest, by correspondence or by telephone prior to the interview and, subsequently, at the start of the interview itself, could easily, but unjustly, have been interpreted as an attempt merely to explore negative experiences of consumer dissatisfaction. This in fact was not the case, although this part of the questioning was often the most sensitive aspect of the whole discussion. It was considered from the outset that a determined effort should be made to avoid interviewee reticence at this or any other juncture of the interview. Again, one means of allaying such reticence was to avoid the use of a tape recorder. The interviews would have been considerably more bland if they had not included forthright management comments and examples, where appropriate, on elements of dissatisfaction. Easterby-Smith et al (1991) and others suggested the strategy of turning on and turning off a tape recorder at the request of the interviewee. Although this was considered it was rejected as an unnecessary interference that was liable to interrupt the flow of conversation. *In sum, it was felt that the presence of a tape recorder would not be positive in terms of either the relationship with the interviewee or the expression of detail and ideas.*

Kvale (1996 : 161) succinctly outlined some of the problems but also some of the real advantages of an approach that foregoes the use of a tape recorder:

' An interview may also be recorded through a reflected use of the researcher's subjectivity and *remembering*, relying on his or her empathy and memory and then writing down the main aspects of the interview after the session, sometimes assisted by notes taken during the interview. There are obvious limitations to a reliance on memory for interview analysis, such as the rapid forgetting of details and the influence of a selective memory. The interviewer's immediate memory will, however,

include the visual information of the situation as well as the social atmosphere and personal interaction, which to a large extent is lost in the audiotape recording. The interviewer's active listening and remembering may ideally work as a selective filter, retaining those very meanings that are essential for the topic and purpose of the study.'

Interview detail comes in a variety of forms. Rubin and Rubin (1995: 24-27) categorised these as narratives, accounts, fronts, stories and myths. In order to counter the potential forgetting of detail - in whatever form - the researcher *immediately* detailed the interviewee responses on completion of the interviews and after leaving the premises of the interviewee. This always occasioned an outpouring of information and comments which in themselves seemed to justify the method to the researcher. Kvale (1996) implied that active listening forces the researcher to treat the live interviews as the real data - rather than a set of tapes - with the subsequent benefits regarding visual information, social atmosphere and personal interaction mentioned above. These benefits were very apparent such that even some considerable time after the interviews had taken place the researcher was able to recall such aspects and relate them to interview detail. In support, Rubin and Rubin (1995) in a discussion of 'less-than-optimal' habits contributed to by tape recording suggested that people who relied too heavily on the tape recorder tended to lose their ability to recall conversations and events from memory.

Interview sequence - outset and beyond

Within the interview the researcher first re-introduced the thrust of the research in the most concise but understandable manner. This essentially consisted of a restatement of the research title - the analysis of consumer satisfaction / dissatisfaction on long-haul inclusive tours. In most instances this was sufficient by way of introduction, particularly when accompanied by a pledge not to divulge and publish the *specific* contents of the interview in a *directly* attributable form without prior acknowledgement from the interviewee regarding the detail of the interviews.

The interviewer also stated that the ultimate purpose of the research was of an academic nature - although hope was also expressed that the findings would be of use to the industry and would be conveyed to the industry on completion of the research. In all instances this was viewed as an adequate rationale insomuch as the interviewer did not perceive any negative reaction from the interviewees - either immediately or, indeed, subsequently.

The interviews were open-ended and non-directive - an approach which is common in elite and specialised interviewing (Dexter (1970)). However, the framework of the flexible schedule (Appendix 3 Document C) sought to guide the key research questions relating to consumer satisfaction / dissatisfaction together with other questions which were thought to be necessary for the ongoing conduct of the research. It provided an unobtrusive focus for the interview - although impractical fit was not sought as this would have narrowed the scope for new understanding. As a side benefit the chosen process of record brought forward the initial stage of analysis to the immediate post interview period.

The bare, essential core questions, as they appeared on the cover guide, useful above all else as a succinct aide memoire, were simplified as below (in italics). These questions were obviously devised in order to inform the overall research questions.

- *What is it (satisfaction / dissatisfaction)?*
- *What affects it?*
- *What is identified / measured / analysed / used?*
- *Who is consulted? Consumers? Service contact personnel? Management?*
- *Why bother?*
- *How and why does it change through time?*

It is important to reiterate that the interviews researched *management* views of consumer satisfaction - for example, *management* views on the way in which the antecedents of satisfaction functioned and related for consumers / consumer service personnel.

In theory, a distinction should not be thrown up between management views per se and consumer views. The views should be similar unless the operator has a deliberate strategy that involves, say, some consumer education - perhaps, for example, as regards environmental education. The same argument could be applied as regards management views and consumer service personnel views.

In reality, it was thought that differences might well exist. Accordingly, the true distinction between management views, consumer views and consumer service personnel views awaited identification and analysis in the case study.

After the formal introduction as regards the thrust and purpose of the research, the interviewees were asked, in a deliberately straightforward manner, the first two

questions above. The interviewer was constantly aware of the need not to pose blatant leading questions based on the literature search and so these first questions established a base-line of management thoughts. After Kvale (1996 : 159), however, it is possible to acknowledge the viewpoint that all questions are leading questions, responses are coauthored and coproduced and that the real test is the direction in which the questions lead. The main purpose of the first two questions, however, was to get the interview launched and from such a perspective they were successful - the responses contributed both thematically to the topic and theory and dynamically to interview interaction. There were only a few instances in which further explanation by the interviewer was required in order to get an initial response.

Most usually, management responded by means of a variety of individual, non-standard definitions, and a wide ranging but not necessarily ordered set of factors that were deemed to affect satisfaction. Note was made of these antecedents with the intention of tighter, deeper and directed probing later on in the interview. Note was also made of the expected antecedents which were not mentioned - also with the intention of later probing. An omission of an antecedent at this stage, however, was not viewed as a signal that such an antecedent was not considered to be relevant. Omission could be accidental and later discussion sought to determine whether the omission was indeed an accidental oversight or deliberate.

Following on from these preliminary and open questions the more directed questioning initially focused on the relevant parts of the given answer. Thus, typically, the interviewee was asked to clarify and expand on the role of, say, expectations as they related to their company. If one of the antecedents generally represented as being of significance in the literature had not been mentioned, the interviewer refrained from introducing it at this stage. This again was because of the need to establish the views of the interviewee with the minimum of interference. Antecedents which remained unmentioned by the interviewees could still be brought forward without prompting from the interviewer at a later stage.

Frequently, the interviewee answers at this stage trespassed on the later aspects of enquiry. Thus, for example, in one interview a discussion of the role of 'emotion' (specifically, 'fear') led on to a consideration of the 'typical' client in terms of demographic, socio-economic, life cycle and psychographic indices. Of course, other examples were numerous. This information was easily disaggregated during the recording period immediately following the interview.

A constant balance needed to be maintained between the desire for as complete a record of interviewee thoughts as possible; the need to cover the broad sweep of research questions within the allocated time period; and the need to maintain interviewee interest. Thus decisions had to be taken during the course of an interview which meant that a particular aspect was not explored to the same degree of depth and detail as in another interview. For example, if time was pressing and the role of 'equity' was not mentioned either during the response to the initial questions or in subsequent discussion the interviewer would broach but not pursue the topic unless the interviewee ventured a response. As a compromise the interviewee would be asked to comment on the given topic during their review of the write-up. In most cases this proved to be a satisfactory arrangement. Furthermore, such situations normally arose during instances in which the interviewee had particular insights on other matters which seemed at the time to be worth pursuing - after all, in the words of Gummesson (1991) life is lived in details and the evidence for generalisations is drawn from specifics.

A feeling of incompleteness that such an approach could produce was more than balanced by depth, detail, vividness and nuance elsewhere (Rubin and Rubin 1995). The compromise was worth making and, furthermore, was considered to be inevitable.

Easterby-Smith et al (1991 : 76) confirmed the need to be flexible within a qualitative interview as evidenced above:

'The skills of an interviewer centre around the ability to recognise what is relevant and remember it, or tape it, so that afterwards detailed notes can be made. This requires the interviewer to be sensitive to events, so that the lines of enquiry can be changed and adapted during the interview'.

Such change and adaptation was facilitated by researcher awareness of the variety of probes and other techniques that might be employed in order to facilitate a purposeful flow of information and consequent coverage of relevant topics - both as selected by the interviewer and the interviewee.

The interviews were normally concluded with an area of questioning on how the interviewee would improve levels of satisfaction - with the implication of a more free, less constrained hand than present reality dictated. This was asked as a means of rounding-off the interview and also as a counter-check against earlier statements.

Interview sequence - post interview

The researcher's record of the interview was subsequently edited and sent to the interviewees as a check of authenticity - so-called 'respondent validation' - with an invitation to add to and / or alter their response. There were only a few occasions when the interviewees were not in almost complete agreement with the edited text. Although there are well established arguments both for and against the verification of such material using this approach (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983 : 195-196) there does seem to be clear practical evidence in this instance that supports its use.

In addition, of course, the researcher was also able to view the tour operator brochure material as a further means of verification. Brochures are supposed to provide a representation of the tourism product and as such reflect, at least to some extent, the view that management has of the product - and, in particular, the view that management has of factors that will motivate consumers to purchase a given product. Consumers are hardly likely to respond to aspects that they do not perceive will lead to a satisfactory experience. Managers, for their part, are hardly likely to promote products which they perceive will not match, or come close to matching consumer experience. This is due to the clear financial advantage of attracting repeat consumers. It is also due to the need to comply with increasingly well defined legal requirements and an increasing consumer awareness of legal rights (Grant and Mason (1995)). Of course, in a market orientated company management should have access to consumer views on satisfaction, even of a limited nature and, furthermore, should be able to offer meaningful views as regards future trends. Accordingly brochures should reflect management views of those aspects that consumers deem will lead to a satisfactory (or more than satisfactory) experience.

Interview sequence - analysis

The general approach that lay behind the processing and analysis of the data throughout the research has already been outlined (see 1.3). The specific approach of Rubin and Rubin (1995 : 227-256) to the data analysis of qualitative interviews encapsulated the approach of the researcher. Data analysis started in the interviews and progressed in a hierarchical structure on to the analysis of themes, the development of categories and consequently the development of 'overarching themes' that could be placed in the context of broader theory.

The interviews are described and analysed in ch. 5 and interpreted alongside the participant observation, literature search and other sources in ch. 7.

4.3 Literature Search.

A literature search proceeded almost throughout the whole length of the research. At times it was obviously more intensive than at other times - for example, during the initial isolation of CS/D with the resultant emergence and confirmation of the research focus and questions, antecedents and consumer behaviour models and also during the review of the range of methodological approaches.

The literature search naturally formed a key element in the pre-understanding that the researcher brought to both the exploratory management interviews (see 4.1) the extended management interviews (see 4.2) and later the participant observation (see 4.5). However, the researcher was wary so as not to pre-determine the findings and analysis of each phase of primary research because of an over-submergence in existing knowledge. The pure tenets of grounded theory were clearly not followed (see 4.0.9) although the researcher strove to attain some of the openness of such an approach.

One notable characteristic of the study was the attempt to bridge the customary boundaries of academic study - so frequently confined within academic specialisms and/or artificially separated from practical reality. Accordingly, the literature search draws on tourism literature contained within disciplines ranging from business and management through to psychology, sociology and anthropology (4.0.4).

4.4 Case Study

4.4.1 Choice and bias.

4.4.2 Validity and reliability.

4.4.3 Description, analysis, interpretation.

4.4.1 Choice and bias

It became increasingly clear that the most favoured approach that would enable the research objectives to be achieved in a final synthesis form would be a case study. Evidence for this came from the stage 1 management interview experiences; the then ongoing stage 2 management interviews; and the review of the literature relating to studies carried out on satisfaction and consumer behaviour as well as general

research methodology and methods. It was not entirely clear at the outset of the study that the research would use a case study and it was even less obvious that the case study would focus on participant observation. However, such opportunism is a legitimate means by which research may be progressed - as long as in the words of Eisenhardt (1989 : 539) it is 'controlled opportunism' and does not provide 'a license to be unsystematic'.

Choice - general

Yin (1994 : 1) in a comparison of experiments, surveys, histories, and the analysis of archival information suggested that:

'Each strategy has peculiar advantages and disadvantages, depending upon three conditions: (a) the type of research question (b) the control an investigator has over actual behavioral events, and (c) the focus on contemporary as opposed to historical phenomena.

In general, case studies are the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real life context (db emphasis).'

Each of the criteria for the choice of a case study as set by Yin was relevant to the research. The research questions posed in this research had been most usefully described as explanatory '*how*' and '*why*' questions (4.0.3). Such questions could also be used in experiments and in histories. However, the *research situation* chosen - an inclusive tour - was unable to be formally *controlled* by the researcher. It was a situation which was far removed from the controlled type of laboratory experiment much favoured by psychologists and just occasionally attempted within tourism related research. It was envisaged that control would extend only to the informal manipulation that could occur in participant observation. This was a situation far removed from a controlled laboratory experiment in which the researched phenomenon would be deliberately divorced from its environment. It was also some way divorced from, say, the sole use of a questionnaire survey which would necessarily limit the number of variables that could be accommodated or from a consumer focus group which would rely on consumer memory.

The research situation potentially allowed a *full range of evidence* to be analysed - such as documents, artefacts and conversations and also observations and casual questioning as a part of the participant observation (together with post-tour interviews). Such variety - in a situation within which the researcher did not have formal control over actual behavioural events - allowed the development of the true

strength of a case study approach. This further justified the choice and position of a case study as the major synthesising element of the primary research.

Additionally, the research was patently focused on *contemporary events*.

In sum, a 'how' and/or 'why' question was being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the researcher had little or no control.

As urged by Platt (1992), therefore, the case study strategy in this research was the preferred strategy because the circumstances and research problems were appropriate.

It was not an ideological commitment that had been followed regardless of the circumstances. In a succinct summary of the need to confront the trade-offs that are usually faced in the choice between a case study, experiment and survey Hammersley (1992 : 185) stated:

'We can never have everything we want, and usually we can only get more of one thing at the expense of getting less of something else. Given this, it seems to me that our choice of case selection strategy should be determined by our judgement of the resulting gains and losses in the light of the particular goals and circumstances of our research, including the resources available.'

Yin (1994 : 13) continued by outlining the technically critical features that characterised case studies:

'1. *A case study is an empirical study that*

- investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly

2. *The case study inquiry*

- copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result
- relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result
- benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.'

Each of these elements which form in effect a case study research strategy were relevant to this particular research study. Their relevance has been briefly outlined here and will become more evident as the whole study is revealed.

Finally, with regard to the research design of this case study, it should be mentioned that the research questions dovetailed with the overall questions for the research as a whole. The *unit of analysis* within the design was the long-haul inclusive tour to Malaysia although there were other embedded units of analysis within this such as the individual consumers / consumer service personnel and the distinct temporal and spatial compartmentalisation that emerged. The group members of the inclusive tour were certainly distinct from those who were outside the group. This strengthened the choice of this unit. Furthermore, the inclusive tour appeared at first sight to have a recognisable start point and finish point in time. Whilst this was true up to a certain extent - thus neutralising one customary difficulty in the choice of a unit of analysis - questions were raised as to exactly when the inclusive tour was conceived in the mind of the consumer and when its effects were completed.

Yin (1994 : 44) stated that:

'Single cases are a common design for doing case studies Overall, the single case design is eminently justifiable under certain conditions - where the case represents a critical case of existing theory, where the case is a rare or unique event, or where the case shares a revelatory purpose.'

From this point of view the choice of one unit of analysis was justified on the grounds that the chosen long-haul tour was both - in the terms of Yin (1994 : 38-41) - a '*critical case*' that could test well formulated theory in a *specific circumstance* and also a '*revelatory case*' in which the researcher had the opportunity to observe and analyse a phenomenon that had previously not been so investigated with such a method.

With the research of further case studies beyond the one tour it may have been possible to claim some form of replication. However, this course was not chosen. It was decided after the completion of the one tour that there was no particular benefit to be gained from further participant observation and case study analysis of another tour - within this research study. Furthermore, whilst only *one* unit of analysis - one long-haul tour - was researched through participant observation, there was considerable opportunity to study the parallel sub-units of the one long-haul tour (general activities, day on day compartmentalisation, individual consumers and so on). Yin (1994 : 44) recognised the strength of such an opportunity:

'Within the single case study may still be incorporated subunits of analysis, so that a more complex - or embedded - design is developed. The subunits can often add significant opportunities for extensive analysis, enhancing the insights into the single case.'

Glaser and Strauss (1967 : 40) claimed, although this has been disputed, that '... in field work... general relations are often discovered *in vivo*, that is, the field worker literally sees them occur'. The researcher partly accepted the philosophical stance that it was not possible to see anything directly or immediately and that all perception and observation depended on assumptions. But through an awareness of assumptions and a willingness to search for other relevant explanations it was felt that the claim for *in vivo* or *post vivo* revelations and clarity was plausible and that the one case study had produced sufficient evidence to answer the research questions and meet the needs of academics and practitioners. A classic deductive approach with the alteration of extraneous variables from case to case was ruled out for all the reasons already recounted - from resources through to increased artificiality. So, on completion of the case study, including the initial data analysis it was concluded that the pursuit of more detail would not enhance the study. This conclusion was not based on any enthusiasm for the notion of *particularisation* as opposed to *generalisation* - the notion that social phenomena are part of specific circumstances and are too prone to change in order to have confidence in any generalisation. A further case or more, from the same operator or from a different operator, would have produced further detail but the researcher considered that the objectives of the research had been achieved. *A narrow but deep analytical focus can generate a broad but deep understanding.*

Hammersley (1992 : 187) extended some flexibility to the researcher with regard to the end point of the research;

'What is the appropriate point at which to stop is impossible to specify in the abstract; it will depend considerably on the nature of the claim and evidence involved, and the purpose which that information is intended to serve.'

Bias

Of course, in general terms there are well articulated arguments against the use of a case study for research purposes. It is suggested that case studies are inherently biased - although experiments and questionnaire surveys can also introduce elements of bias.

Also, case studies are criticised on the grounds that they do not allow scientific generalisation to populations or universes. However, as Yin (1994 : 10) stated:

'... the case study like the experiment does not represent a 'sample' and the investigator's role is to expand and generalise theories (analytic generalisation) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalisation) ... the goal is to do a 'generalising' and not a 'particularising' analysis.'

Gummesson, too, (1994 : 78-79) stated that:

'It no longer seems so 'obvious' that a limited number of observations cannot be used as a basis for generalisation. Nor does it seem to be 'obvious' any longer that properly devised statistical studies based on large numbers of observations will lead to meaningful generalisations... On the one hand, quantitative studies based on a large number of observations are required in order to determine how much, how often, and how many. The other dimension involves the use of in-depth studies based on exhaustive investigations and analyses to identify certain phenomena...and lay bare mechanisms that one suspects will exist in other companies.'

This sort of generalisation had a parallel in the work of Mitchell (1983) who argued that case study research allows 'logical' but not statistical inference. '*Analytic generalisation*' involves the use of previously developed theory as a template or blueprint with which to compare the empirical results of the case study. In this instance, the template/blueprint was created, albeit as a flexible framework, by the wide ranging literature associated strongly or tenuously with consumer behaviour and satisfaction with regard to both products and services - as well as other components such as the management interviews and prior first-hand, direct experience with the research situation both as a consumer and as a tour leader. To some extent this allayed the supposed weakness of theory building from a case study as identified by Eisenhardt (1989 : 547):

'... building theory from cases may result in narrow and idiosyncratic theory. Case study theory building is a bottom up approach such that the specifics of data produce the generalisations of the theory. The risks are that the theory describes a very idiosyncratic phenomenon or that the theorist is unable to raise the level of generality of the theory. Indeed, many of the grounded case studies mentioned earlier resulted in modest theories.'

Hammersley (1992 :189-191), appeared to consider that the back-up of such a template would go some way to offset what he thought of as the somewhat unconvincing reaction of some researchers to the issue of generalisability.

4.4.2 Validity and reliability

Despite an acknowledgement of the views of Wolcott (1994) and his supremely sceptical view of the overt and fanatical drive toward measures of validity and reliability in qualitative studies the researcher sought to satisfy the requirements of traditional qualitative researchers with regard to the supposed measures of case study quality. Accordingly, the researcher actively considered the four commonly cited tests that are applied in such empirical research - construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability.

With regard to the *construct validity* - the establishment of operational measures for the concepts under investigation - it was possible to relate back/forward to the literature search /management interviews in order to confirm that a sound set of antecedents of satisfaction were established. These antecedents formed the basis of the research questions - they were the focus of the data collection. The management / consumer / consumer service personnel perception and verbalisation of the effects of these antecedents were systematically noted and corroborated before, during and after the EM tour through multiple contacts and multiple sources of evidence - and then sorted relative to the theory and emerging theory. These operational measures produced converging lines of inquiry or data triangulation - important in justifying a claim to construct validity.

Internal validity was also established by the same method of systematic noting, sorting and corroboration allied to analysis via a modified version of the process of analysis outlined by Corbin and Strauss (1990).

External validity was established through analytic generalisation of the results to theory in the case study. It was accepted that generalisation was *analytical* rather than *statistical* in nature. A case study (or set of case studies) cannot be deemed to be representative - although this should not suggest that the case study was chosen in a cavalier manner since it was chosen for practical and theoretical reasons rather than statistical reasons. The careful consideration given to the choice of the EM tour is detailed elsewhere (see 4.5.3).

Reliability, the test which questions whether the operations of the study could be repeated with the same results, was established by the systematic documentation of the data or evidence base so that other researchers could review the evidence directly - or as directly as possible given that some of the evidence was in the form of participant observations. In addition, sufficient evidence is presented in the EM narrative itself so that *independent* conclusions can be drawn by the reader.

Reliability is also established in the thesis by maintaining a chain of evidence from initial research questions through to the data collection, data description and analysis and on to interpretation. This chain is important as it traces the development of the research project.

These tests to some extent parallel the validity criteria laid down by Hammersley (1992). According to Hammersley (1992 : 69):

'An account is valid or true if it represents accurately those features of the phenomena that it is intended to describe, explain or theorise... we must judge the validity of the claims on the basis of the adequacy of the evidence offered in support of them.'

First, this depends on *plausibility* - whether claims are beyond reasonable doubt. If the answer is 'no' the second step is to consider whether the claims are *credible* - whether the claim can reasonably be expected to be accurate given the circumstances in which the research was carried out. Evidence of the sort outlined so far presumably would allow confidence that both these criteria had been met. Third, the validity depends on the *amount* and *kind* of evidence presented for the central claims and, fourth, the validity depends on the *type* of claim that is made for the research - definitions, description, explanation or theory. Whilst descriptive claims relate to what occurred in a particular place at a particular time a theory claim requires potential alternative causes for the relationships between types of phenomena. This level of validity can be judged from the interpretation of the research that develops from the description and analysis of both the management and consumer interviews and the participant observation (ch. 7).

4.4.3 Description, analysis, interpretation

The analysis of the case study broadly followed the guidelines that have been laid down in a still comparatively limited number of texts (Glaser and Strauss (1967), Miles and Huberman (1984), Corbin and Strauss (1990), Yin (1994)) and outlined at a general level earlier in this thesis (4.0.9). The basis of such analysis can be considered to be the sufficient presentation of evidence and careful consideration of alternative interpretations allied to rigorous thought.

Yin (1994) stressed, too, that it was vitally important to have a general analysis strategy in the first place. The case study did indeed possess such a strategy since the analysis followed and interpreted the research questions against empirical evidence. The research questions were generated from reviews of the literature, and insights derived from initial management interviews and general experience in tourism both as a provider and consumer. A visible, logical thread existed, therefore, through the whole work. The writing of Wolcott (1994), specifically his irreverence and three-fold split in to description, analysis and interpretation also particularly informed the approach in this stage of the study.

4.5 Participant observation.

4.5.1 Relationship alongside positivism.

4.5.2 Key advantages and basic typology.

4.5.3 Preferred conditions.

4.5.4 Shuttle of observation and interaction.

4.5.5 Wide focus and close focus.

4.5.6 Trust.

4.5.7 Method of record.

4.5.8 Analysis.

4.5.1 Relationship alongside positivism.

Whilst case studies take a variety of forms and may or may not involve participant observations the method of participant observation is normally practised as a case study. The original source of the study problem (practical experience and abstract theory) allied to its evolutionary development through time (further theory and management interviews) required an in depth exploration within a real situation that strongly favoured a participant observation approach.

In a similar vein to the earlier discussion with reference to the general selection of data selection techniques (see 4.0.7) and the modus operandi of the extended management interviews it is again necessary to remember the place of participant observation in the wider methodological research context

Relevantly, Johnson (1975 : 7) brought together a threefold criticism of the standard positivist view of science:

'The validity of the theories generated by the traditional methods has been questioned. The challenge has been posed of whether the traditional conceptions of scientific conduct reflect a valid account of how science is done. Finally, the question has been raised of whether it is theoretically and methodically possible to study human actions with methods inherited from the natural and physical sciences.'

Agar (1986 : 70-71), with reference to ethnography, a close ally of participant observation, colourfully illustrated the questions that crowd in upon the non-positivist: '...if you listen to discussions about social research, whether the speakers are professionals or laypersons, you hear the old bells tolling - "What's your hypothesis?" "What's the independent

variable?" "How can you generalise with such a small sample?"..."Who did you use for a control group?" Those are important questions for some research, including, oftentimes, parts of an ethnographic study. But they simply miss the point of much of what goes into ethnography.'

Ryan (1995 : 214) made a particularly relevant and convincing appeal for the use of *conversations in tourism* research - and *conversations* are one of the key elements of *participant observation* - whilst arguing within some limits against the positivist approach. His research involved conversations with tourists aged over 55 in a hotel lounge and a beach restaurant in Majorca. The tourists were aware of his research purpose - which was not the case in the mode of participant observation that was subsequently chosen for the EM tour - but the appeal nevertheless retains its relevance: 'To argue from the individualised, subjective stories of a small convenience sample is, within an empirical tradition of research, invalid. Yet, if it is accepted that tourism is concerned with an experience of places and the interactions that occur at those destinations; that the nature of these experiences are important to people as witnessed by the continual wish for holidays and the high levels of repeated expenditure on the intangible components of holidays... then research that denies the opportunity for holiday-makers to speak of their own experiences in their own words - that seeks only reactions to a researcher dominated agenda - is itself limited. In any case there is a paradox at the heart of quantitative methodologies, for the statistics are derived from the personal interpretation by a respondent of the perceived nature of the request for information...'

In a presentation of similar alternative proposals Johnson (1975) drew attention to the naturalistic perspective of Matza (1969) and the contention that the tools of humanism - experience, intuition and empathy - have an important role in the commitment to the 'fidelity' of a phenomenon/research. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983 : 12) presented the case for naturalism:

'Rather than importing methods from the physical sciences...we must adopt an approach that respects the nature of the social world, which allows it to reveal its nature to us.'

However, Geertz (1993 : 30) warned against an ethnographic approach that abandoned objectivity - because complete objectivity is impossible - and embraced researcher sentiments:

'As Robert Solow has remarked that is like saying that as a perfectly aseptic environment is impossible, one might as well conduct surgery in a sewer.'

Accordingly, Geertz also advocated the need for theory to remain close to the ground and also added that whilst the ethnographic approach was not strictly *predictive* it did need to generate cogent *interpretations* of realities past and realities to come.

Accordingly, a clear intention of the field research whether in the form of interviews or the pending participant observation was to keep in close and direct contact with the data.

4.5.2 Key advantages and basic typology.

The contention here is that it is the participant observation method that truly discriminates in favour of the observation and consequent description, analysis and interpretation of naturally occurring everyday events. Burgess (1984 : 79) encapsulated the key advantages of participant observation:

'The value of being a participant observer lies in the opportunity that is available to collect rich detailed observations based in natural settings. Furthermore, the researcher can obtain accounts of situations in the participant's own language which gives access to the concepts that are used in everyday life. The researcher can, therefore, construct an account of a social situation on the basis of the various accounts that are obtained from informants. In these circumstances, there is an opportunity to collect the different versions of events that are available. Here, it is the researcher's aim to compare these accounts with each other, and with other observations that the researcher has made in the field of study. The result is that researchers can utilise their observations together with their theoretical insights to make seemingly irrational or paradoxical behaviour comprehensible to those within or beyond the situation that is studied. Observations can also be used to support or refute ideas about human behaviour and to generate questions that can be used in future research.'

The researcher would only add based on experience that the participant observation method need not confine itself to the study of irrational and paradoxical behaviour. Rational and non-paradoxical behaviour may also be observed.

Geertz (1987 : 16) commented on the possibilities that arise from '*being there*'.

'Ethnographers need to convince us... not merely that they themselves have truly 'been there', but ... that had we been there we should have seen what they saw, felt what they felt, concluded what they concluded.'

This should lead to the achievement of '*thick*' but nevertheless '*interpretive*' description (Geertz 1993 : 20) - the rationale indeed behind the detailed, extensive description and analysis of the participant observation (ch.6).

Gold (1969 : 30) devised a basic typology of field roles for participant observation - complete participant, participant as observer, observer as participant and complete observer. In a tourism context - a study of small groups of young American and Canadian tourists in Munich - Hartmann (1988 : 94) recounted the use of both

participant observation and non-participant observation. Both methods had their advantages and disadvantages vis-a vis the other and also vis-a-vis the more standard interview approach to research. For example, Hartmann stated:

'The tool of non-participant observation rendered an abundance of information. However, it failed to bring into focus the purpose and meaning of the tourists' activities. Since the observer was required to maintain an appropriate distance, he or she could not always comprehend all the actions undertaken....By contrast, the participant observer in this study always became aware of what was done and for what reason, and how particular activities came about. The (participant) observer became an integral part of the tourists' group...'

Indeed although strongly advocating the *combination* of field methods in tourism research - a multi-method approach that was adopted in this long-haul study, too, with participant observation intertwined alongside the early sets of management interviews and post-tour consumer interviews - Hartmann (1988 : 101) nevertheless suggested: 'Of the various field methods and techniques employed, participants observation rendered the most intriguing results. The few cases completed and the long hours of insider reporting yielded important information.... The results also provided unexpected insights otherwise unobtainable by any of the other field methods used.'

The researcher eventually adopted the first role outlined by Gold (1969) - *complete participant* - which is distinguished from the others by its covert rather than partially or completely overt nature. The rationale for such a choice was encouraged by the works already cited - together with a whole gamut of other reasons as detailed below.

4.5.3 Preferred conditions.

Participant observation of a long-haul tour appeared to meet the conditions that Jorgensen (1989) considered to be required for the appropriate use of such a method.

Insider perspective

First, the research problem was crucially concerned with human meanings and interactions, experiences and reactions viewed from the *insiders'* perspective - the perspective of the consumers and consumer service personnel. A group of 10-20 persons travelling together within a tour group seemed in advance to allow the necessary degree of rapport with the people, events and overall setting. In the event, the group size of 11 persons including the tour leader and the researcher genuinely allowed an excellent contrast of diversity and depth that was amenable to thorough research.

Second, the phenomenon of investigation was observable within a life situation or setting that was not created or manipulated by the researcher, seemingly very close to the 'naturalist' as opposed to the 'artificial' setting - a long-haul tour with 10-20 participants. The selection of the specific setting for the participant observation emerged after a long period of direct and indirect thought or mulling. Early on in the research it was recognised from personal experience that it would be impracticable to observe individuals or small groups such as couples who were ostensibly on an inclusive tour but had no necessary obligation whatsoever to interact either with other individuals or the surrounding tourism environment. Such observation would have involved a long term commitment in the field - in a limited, sedentary field setting such as a beach resort - which was not feasible given the constraints of time and money. Furthermore, it was perceived that the opportunity for meaningful observation, even after a long term commitment, would be less than that achievable within the still natural setting of a defined but mobile tour group in an inclusive tour that involved movement from place to place and intra-group activity - with the consequent interaction that was so engendered. Personal experience of both types of inclusive tour, sedentary and more mobile, confirmed by comments during the course of the management interviews, suggested that whilst the latter offered a more intense experience it was an experience that was different in *degree* rather than in *kind*. *However, whether this perception was true or not, it was felt that the research setting of a small mobile tour group was both highly focussed from the method point of view and directly relevant in its own right to an important and expanding sub-sector of the long-haul tourism market.*

During the management interviews the researcher was able to identify appropriate tour group products with small numbers of consumers (10-20) which would facilitate the power of participant observation. Furthermore, during the course of each interview managers had outlined the typical consumer in terms of standard social, economic and demographic indices. The profile outlined by a number of tour operators was closely in line with the perceived profile of the researcher. This was important given the decision regarding the covert nature of the participant observation and the obvious need to establish, participate in and sustain relationships with consumer insiders. Some tour operators also offered a chance for members of the public, specifically those on their mailing list, to preview their product at slide-show presentations. One such tour operator presentation in Oxford confirmed the consumer profile that had been outlined

during an extended management interview. Most importantly, the actual composition on the subsequent tour with the tour operator was almost *exactly* as predicted. So, for example, the tour operator group matched the socio-economic grouping of the researcher and also the age of the researcher was the *precise* average age of the group as a whole.

With regard to the specific tour activities the determined aim was to observe a tour which had a range of *passive* and *active* components and which would incorporate elements from each of the *sectors* commonly identified as forming the tourism industry.

The chosen tour and tour operator appeared to closely match the established aim. Particularly, this tour was described in the brochure as a 'leisurely tour' and an 'easy going adventure' and had time set apart for the passive pursuits of relaxing, beachcombing and swimming but also involved the rather more active mountain walking and jungle walking. Additionally, each sector of the tourism industry was represented and the tour also promised a variety of intra-sector experience. Accommodation, although confined to 2-star hotels, lodges and resthouses was nevertheless stated to be variable in standard. Catering would involve both local and more international meals. Transport was by train, ferry, riverboat and hydrofoil as well as tour specific minibus. Attractions ranged from the urban contrasts of commercial Singapore and Kuala Lumpur to (supposedly) colonial Jerantut. The coast, beaches and coral gardens of Tioman Island contrasted physically with the virgin rainforest of Taman Negara National Park; and the Malay influenced east coast of Malaysia contrasted culturally with the Chinese and British influenced west coast.

Access

The third condition of Jorgensen (1989) was met inasmuch as the researcher was able to gain access to the setting. The researcher participated as a consumer. Accordingly, access depended on time and the money required for purchase. The setting was *open* rather than closed. In general the setting was also *visible* rather than invisible, hidden, concealed and obscured. In the terms of Goffman (1959) it was '*frontstage*' rather than '*backstage*'.

After a considerable degree of deliberation it had been decided that prior formal approval for access from management in the tour operator chosen for the participant observation study should not be sought. This reversed an earlier assumption that management would be informed. It was originally felt that it would be courteous to

inform management of the research intentions. However, on reflection it was not possible to guarantee that management would have consented to the research - even with a courteous approach. This was particularly so because of the participant nature of the research in a setting outside of management day-to-day control. In contrast to observational studies conducted on the premises of an organisation it was obvious that a long-haul tour group was distant from the source of management observation. Furthermore, it was perceived that management might initially be diffident about the research even though they had some positive knowledge of the researcher from the extended management interview and even though the researcher was confident of the academic and practical sense of the participant observation method. It was thought that management would have an over-riding concern to support the tourism experience of the consumers. Even a minor degree of diffidence on the part of management could have led them to withdraw support even after it had been granted. Alternatively, such diffidence could have prompted the management to themselves covertly inform ground handlers/tour leaders of the research intentions. This could have had an impact on the tourism experience offered. At worst the consumers themselves could have been informed thus reducing the relevance of the study findings.

Dalton (1959 : 275) clearly described his reservations with regard to decisions concerning the covert/overt nature of participant observation:

'In no case did I make formal approach to the top management of any of the firms to get approval or support for the research. Several times I have seen other researchers do this and have watched higher managers set the scene and limit the inquiry to specific areas... the smiles and delighted manipulation of researchers by guarded personnel, the assessments made of researchers and their findings... all raised questions about who controlled the experiments.'

Clearly, many of the decisions surrounding the research might have had to be confirmed with the tour operator management if they had been installed as the effective 'gatekeepers' to the research - including fundamental elements such as the research questions or the choice of tour and destination. The researcher would have been in a favourable position to explain the research and also the previous interview contact with management effectively amounted to what Johnson (1975 : 63-64) described as a 'progressive entry strategy'. However, it was considered that the potential negative effects counterbalanced any positive gain. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983 : 72) presented an overview of the arguments that had to be resolved before the covert approach was adopted:

'Negotiating access is a balancing act. Gains and losses now and later, as well as ethical and strategic considerations, must be traded off against one another in whatever manner is judged to be most appropriate, given the purposes of the research and the circumstances in which it is to be carried out.'

It was felt that management would not resist a potential request for follow-up from the researcher on account of such a covert method. It was presumed that the consumer experience would not be affected by the presence of the researcher - or at least not affected any more or any less than any other single consumer could affect the experience. Accordingly, in the post tour stage it was felt that the management would no longer be wary of the research interfering with the consumer tour experiences. Additionally, management might be alert to the potential benefits of cooperation given that the participant observation stage of the field work was already completed. Management could gain business insight from the study and the researcher could gain further clarification and extension. So, the entry strategy was *covert* rather than overt. Bulmer (1982) argued that covert participant observation was unethical because of the deception involved. On the other hand, Douglas (1976) considered that a covert strategy was essential to acquiring truthful information. Meanwhile, Fine (1987) established a sort of middle ground by suggesting that it was possible to disclose a research interest once a researcher had established a trusting relationship.

Gold (1969 : 34) outlined two common potential problems that faced the covert participant observer:

'One, he may become so self-conscious about revealing his true self that he is handicapped when attempting to perform convincingly in the pretended role. Or two, he may 'go native', incorporate the role into his self-conceptions and achieve self expression in the role, but find he has so violated his observer role that it is almost impossible to report his findings'.

The first problem was hoped to be resolved by the almost complete pre-determined coincidence of the researcher's actual and pretended role - the researcher only aimed to drop the tag of tourism lecturer and assume the tag of marketing lecturer. In the terminology of Gold the 'mask of pretense' would be so closely bound that the risk of exposure and research failure would be very low. The second problem would be overcome through a deliberate strategy of immersion and resurfacing (see 4.5.4).

The researcher did not seriously consider the possibility of announcing the research interest to the tour group at any stage during the tour. It was felt that this would have created a degree of non spontaneity to conversations. It was also felt that this would not be fair on group dynamics as the researcher intended to contribute to the group as a full participant. However, because the researcher had decided to adopt the (true) identity of a university lecturer in marketing (but not tourism) it was felt that it would be possible to legitimately and persuasively introduce an overt research interest in the post tour period. This would be necessary for potential post tour clarification and

extension. Such an approach paralleled that of Fine (1987) - and was proven to be well founded.

Of course, this meant that it was not possible to adapt a tourist time-budget approach such as that of Pearce (1988) to the research problem. The opportunity for a systematic round of overt interviews with consumers during the course of the tour was also foregone - along with similar rounds of questionnaires or the use of focussed or non-focussed consumer-generated diaries (only one consumer maintained a diary). *However, it was considered that the benefits of these lost opportunities would be far out-weighed by the cost incurred from the loss of a covert approach.*

Size and location limit

The fourth condition of Jorgensen (1989) was that the phenomenon was sufficiently limited in size and location to be studied as a case. From the outset of the study it was tentatively suggested that behaviour on inclusive tours/package tours could be viewed as a microcosm of behaviour in tourism in general. Furthermore, although there has been some management and academic argument as to when an inclusive tour starts and finishes in the mind of the consumer each tour has a clear published departure date and return date. Observation could proceed between these times in the almost certain knowledge that every consumer would recognise them as the core, if not the whole, of the inclusive tour experience. Not only would a tour have generally distinct temporal limits but also it would have clear limits with regard to its functioning, a pre-determined size limit with regard to consumer numbers and pre-determined movement through geographical space. Jorgensen's condition would be well met.

Appropriate questions

The fifth condition of Jorgensen (1989) was that the study questions were appropriate for a case study. It has been shown that a case study may be the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed. This was indeed the case in this study (see 4.0.3).

Appropriate problems for direct observation

Jorgensen's sixth and final condition was that the research problems were capable of being addressed by direct observation and other means within the field setting. It was necessary to be aware of the criticism of Gold (1959, 1969) and others that a

participatory role as a complete insider could conflict with observation. Also insider participation could never be exhaustive in its findings because there was so much meaning and interaction within all settings - yet alone an intensive setting such as a long-haul tour. *However, a careful evaluation suggested that the complete insider role was a commonsense, comprehensive and creative solution that could successfully operate at the heart of the research problem.* Jorgensen's (1989 : 56) perspective which celebrated the fusion of observation and participation appeared to be powerfully convincing:

'Accurate (objective and truthful) findings are *more* rather than less likely as the researcher becomes involved directly, personally, and existentially with people in daily life.... The potential for misunderstanding and inaccurate observation increases when the researcher remains aloof and distanced physically and socially from the subject of study. Participation reduces the possibility of inaccurate observation, because the researcher gains through subjective involvement direct access to what people think, do, and feel from multiple perspectives.'

The detail of the field research hopefully bears testament to the thoughts, actions and feelings of the EM tourists with whom the researcher had close contact.

4.5.4 Shuttle of observation and interaction.

Schwartz and Schwartz (1969 : 98) described a similar viewpoint together with a practical outline of how it may be accomplished:

'In active participant observation a shuttle process occurs in which the observer, participating actively at one moment, shifts imaginatively the next moment to observing what he and others have been doing and then shifts back to the interaction, thereby continuing the participation uninterrupted. This back and forth shift in imagination has the character of immediate retrospective analysis and is later combined with subsequent retrospective analysis... Active participant observation appears to be more conducive to self-observation. By experiencing the effects of the subjects on himself, he may be able to perceive more clearly their effects on those with whom they ordinarily are in interaction.'

On the other hand, Dalton (1959 : 283) believed that a researcher could have too much knowledge or be too objective. Nevertheless, he suggested the same solution as Schwartz and Schwartz (1969) - alternately to be immersed in the experience, step out in the role of critic, reorientate and re-enter. This allows the researcher to more closely experience the true consumer experience (ch. 6). The researcher could detail almost constant examples of *immersion* and *resurfacing* (Dalton (1959) : 283)).

Importantly, too, insider participation appeared to match the perceived interpersonal skills of the researcher as a listener and questioner - the same skills highlighted as

crucial for such study by Wolcott (1994). A tradition in qualitative research is that the personality of the scientist is a key research instrument (Gummesson 1994 : 3). Additionally, there did not appear to be a conflict with any other role or self-concept. It was anticipated that the role could be sustained over time.

The various conditions of Jorgensen (1989) appeared logical, workable and comprehensive. Indeed, in the post field-work period it was difficult to add new requirements or to suggest that any one of the requirements could realistically be omitted from the list.

However, it was not just Jorgensen's argument nor the work of other theorists nor the inevitable wealth of reading both on methodology and the wider literature review that finally shaped the exact composition of the field research. Two specific experiences also acted as crucial guides. The first was a period spent as an outsider or non-participant observer of the daily school experience of specific high school children during a post graduate education course. This experience was devastatingly revealing. It exposed among other things how school children could assiduously and good naturedly manipulate a system and its teachers. More relevantly for this study the long lasting memory of that observation period acted as an initial prompt to the possibility of employing observation, whether non participant or participant, in the current study. The second experience was the extraordinary description, analysis and interpretation achieved in the collected non participant and participant observation studies of Wolcott (1994) and in particular the 'Sneaky Kid' trilogy. This very definitely showed participation and observation in complete fusion.

4.5.5 Wide focus and close focus

There was a set prior intention as regards the specific means by which information would be observed and gathered. Initial observations were intended to be wide in focus. The aim was to become familiar with the functional workings of the tour group; the emergent patterns of everyday life in terms of activities, transport and accommodation; characteristics of individuals within the group in terms of broad demographic, socio economic and psychographic elements; and, finally, the initial relationships between the individuals within the group. It would also be necessary to become familiar with the macro setting of Malaysia. The choice of Malaysia as a destination that was new to the researcher was deliberate. Originally the inclination had been to conduct the fieldwork in East Africa. This would have been a more familiar environment for the researcher. However, it was felt that this would have dissipated

the richness of some of the initial impressions that would be experienced alongside other tourists at the start of an original tourism experience in a new destination. It was correctly assumed that whereas there were likely to be repeat consumers in the tour group there were unlikely to be many consumers with previous experience of the destination. It was important that the researcher paralleled the initial naivete of the fellow consumers because the personal tourism experience of the researcher represented an additional source of access (beyond observation and conversation) to insider thoughts, feelings and actions.

It was intended that the initial wide focus observations would not interfere with direct participation in the tourism experience concordant with the researcher's role as a tour member. However, given the time span of the tour it was recognised that the wide focus would quickly have to be complemented with rather more closely focused observations, informal conversations and casual questioning. Clearly such conversations and questioning would have to resemble those of ordinary everyday life. Jorgensen (1989 : 85) stated that:

'Good conversationalists ... know that license to ask questions and otherwise participate in the conversation frequently is earned by demonstrating a willingness, even an eagerness to listen to what other people have to say. Listening is the main feature for collecting data by casual conversations. Questioning, in this context, is most appropriate for getting people to continue talking, to suggest further discussion of a particular issue, or to direct conversation very carefully toward a topic of special interest.'

Accordingly, the researcher followed the dictum that was explained to Whyte (1981 : 303) by his informant in the classic 'Street Corner Society':

'The next day Doc explained the lesson of the previous evening. " Go easy on that 'who', 'what', 'when', 'where' stuff, Bill. You ask those questions and people will clam up on you. If people accept you, you can just hang around, and you'll learn the answers in the long run without even having to ask the questions."

I found that this was true. As I sat and listened, I learned the answers to questions that I would not even have had the sense to ask if I had been getting my information solely on an interviewing basis. I did not abandon questioning all together, of course. I simply learned to judge the sensitiveness of the question and my relationship to the people so that I only asked a question in a sensitive area when I was sure that my relationship to the people was very solid.'

It was found that there was hardly a truer word written in all the studies of participant observation. From Day 1 of the participant observation there were an abundance of relevant listening opportunities.

In short, it was not perceived that the listening approach would present a problem to the researcher. The general aim was to focus and then re-focus (via observation, conversation and questioning) on specific events and sets of events together with specific individuals and micro groups. Adapted from Burgess (1984) *the focus of the participant observation was on the social situation in specific spaces and places at particular times, set within particular circumstances and with the involvement of specific actors*. Such social situations would allow the exploration of established and even emergent research questions and propositions.

4.5.6 Trust

Of course, neither the wide focus period of observation nor the more detailed period of observation could be accomplished without trust or at least what Johnson (1975 : 142) called '*sufficient trust*' - a personal, commonsense judgment about what can be accomplished with a given person. Moreover, even sufficient trust could change over time and the researcher was aware that there would be the possibility that trust could erode because of an over-identification with one individual or sub-group. However, such erosion did not occur or even threaten to occur. There were an absence of dominant individuals or isolated sub-groups. This facilitated the progression of the research. The researcher was probably the closest person in the group to the tour leader but it would be a fallacy to presume that this closeness was in any way thought of as over-identification. Such over-identification was not commented on by the other tourists either directly or indirectly during the fieldwork and even if this was the case there is a defence for the use of feeling/rapport as a legitimate approach within field research.

Trust, of course, is closely bound together with the establishment of relationships and the researcher recognised that this would require a need to blend together with other consumers and become fully engaged in events and conversations across the range of sub-groups. It was anticipated that this would entail a heavy physical and psychological toll despite the low level of role conflict. This toll would be added to by the imperative to record. In reality, the physical burden was heavier than expected - on several occasions one day of research and recording rolled in to the next day. However, the psychological burden was less than expected - probably because of the very close coincidence of the actual and assumed identity of the researcher.

4.5.7 Method of record.

Field notes

It was intended that the main method of recording would be field notes compiled at the end of each day or during significant other breaks during the day when the opportunity arose. In the terms of Burgess (1984 : 167-174) these would consist of a number of elements. '*Substantive fieldnotes*' would be a continuous record of the observations, conversations and questioning with a focus on words, phrases and the circumstance of words and phrase use so as to provide an almost literal account. '*Methodological fieldnotes*' would be a continuous record of the problems and opportunities presented by the participant observation method together with comments on the resolution of problems and adoption of opportunities. '*Analytic memos*' would be a continuous record of analysis in the field. In the event, most of the notes were recorded at the end of the day - there were few significant breaks (Appendix 6). However, the threefold split of the fieldnotes proved to be an extremely useful framework for thought during the end of day write-up.

These various types of fieldnote complimented the shuttle of observation and interaction during the participant observation and seemed to resemble the most appropriate categories of introspection that Wallendorf and Brucks (1993 : 340-342) favoured in attempts to advance theory in consumer behaviour. Their least preferred category of introspection - *researcher introspection* - in which the researcher is the sole introspector of the study was barely used except at the immediate outset of the field work (see 6.1). Much more prominent although often indistinguishable were *guided introspection* - in which the researcher asked (albeit covertly) the tourist consumers to think aloud about their thoughts, feelings and actions; *interactive introspection* - in which there was a two-way sharing of experiences between the researcher and the tourists; and *reflexivity within research* - in which the focus of the research was on the tourist whilst nevertheless acknowledging in the writing the presence of the researcher. It was intended to follow the tenets advocated by Wallendorf and Brucks (1993 : 342-343) with regard to reflexivity within research: 'Rather than disembodied authority... reflexivity within research ... (adopts) an analytical and authorial stance that explicitly discusses the presence of the particular participant observer... (but) does not take the researcher as the focus of the research.'

The determined object was to be a part of and apart from the emerging tourist experience. As with the management interviews there was an awareness that a thin line had to be negotiated between passivity and impassivity, reaction and proaction.

It was considered that notes would primarily be recorded into a field note book or other unobtrusive materials such as letter paper or postcard letters. Evidence from the management interviews strongly suggested that the researcher was capable of retaining information for some limited period of time and the researcher remained of the opinion that a tape recorder had the effect of lowering concentration and acted as an unnecessary substitute for heightened awareness. Constant use of a tape recorder would have seemed to be unusual as well as being impracticable. In any case it was anticipated that many conversations would be broken and incomplete thus facilitating a written record. *This is exactly what happened.*

However, it was decided to carry a tape recorder as an additional primary means of recording observations when not in the company of other tourists. In the event, such a record was not made. The researcher was only tempted to use the tape recorder on Day 10 in Tioman Island with the intention of providing a back-up to the written field-notes - but the process of making the back-up was slow and began to intrude on potentially new participant observations. Accordingly, it was abandoned.

The tape recorder also left the option of recording informal reminiscences from consumers toward the end of the tour experience. Such a recording session or sessions would obviously have had to be creatively designed, insomuch as their ultimate purpose would be concealed, but the researcher did envisage the possibility for such creative activity. The researcher had travelled around the USA in a small tour group almost 20 years previously and had taken part in such an informal end of tour recording session that was organised by a newspaper journalist who was also one of the tour group. This was a realistic, convincing model to follow. However, it was not carried out because the researcher felt that the participants would not have added extra insights on tape that had not already been picked up in observations or conversations. The tape recorder options were ultimately considered to be fail-safe measures that did not need to be operated.

In contrast to the open decision with reference to the use or otherwise of the tape recorder it was decided from the outset not to use a camcorder. It was considered that pointing a camcorder in one direction would actually narrow the field of vision and that it would also tempt the researcher to delay description and initial analysis into the post field-work phase. This view was supported elsewhere.

Finally, it was considered that stills photography would form part of the documentary evidence as it would not interfere with the observation but would prompt later memories. Of course, photography would be a perfectly normal tourist occurrence - as would the collection of tourism documents such as guides, brochures, maps and so on that could act as an aide memoire or could have an even more central role, rather than merely a supportive role, in the study.

Retrospective reworking and beyond

Schwartz and Schwartz (1969 : 90) recognised that there is a process of registering, interpreting, and recording observations so that observation is a continuous process of evaluation. This process may be very short and urgent within the field context or else rather more leisurely during a period of 'retrospective reworking'. Schwartz and Schwartz believed that such retrospective reworking actually allowed for the expansion of observations. *The combination of recording methods was sufficient to encourage confidence in the record of observations and the subsequent potential for legitimate expansion.* Again this confidence was well-founded. Retrospective reworking did indeed expand the observations although such expansion was recorded separately within the raw field-notes.

The focus on individuals and mini groups left the opportunity to develop life histories in the post tour period. Whether or not the tour operator decided to cooperate in this post tour period the researcher envisaged that there would not be a difficulty in arranging to meet consumers. It was presumed that addresses would be exchanged. Accordingly, there would be the opportunity to pursue experiences relating both to the shared tour and other tourism experiences within an informal interview setting. It was thought that selected life histories relating to tourism careers could be developed if these were considered to be relevant to the pursuit of the questions and propositions. Burgess (1984 : 174), with the use of an analogy from Read (1965 : ix) went so far as to affirm that:

'... it is essential to provide detailed cases of individuals' lives. For without that, the studies are devoid of material that brings a people to life:

"they are pinned like butterflies in a glass case, with the difference, however, that we cannot tell what colour these specimens are, and we are never shown them in flight, never see them soar or die except in generalities. Read (1965 : ix)." '

In the event, the extensive conversations during the tour itself allowed the researcher to develop considerable detail on the tourism careers of the tourists in situ. Much of

the 'colour' and 'flight' emerged during the participant observation. But the post field-work interviews were nevertheless carried through because it was felt that these would provide a further perspective on the tour - in effect the interviews would provide a temporal source of triangulation. It was felt that the tourists might also engage in their own retrospective reworking. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983 : 194) succinctly argued this case;

'Once again, it is not a matter of accepting or rejecting data, but rather of knowing how to interpret it; there is a great temptation to assume that actions, statements, or interview responses represent stable features of the person or of settings. This may be correct, but it cannot be assumed. Actions are embedded in temporal contexts and these may shape them in ways that are important for analysis.'

Whilst it was not a prerequisite of the study it was anticipated that support from the tour operator in the post tour period could further the research in a number of ways. First, access to the tour leader report would allow a comparison to be made with observation, casual conversation and informal questioning. Access to the consumer CSQ returns would offer the same benefit - even though the researcher was sceptical of the value of such returns. Second, access to management would allow a forum for discussion, analysis and interpretation about specific experiences with the tour operator. From this point of view the researcher would be on more equal terms than during the management interview.

In reality, the tour leader did not provide a report either to the local ground operator or the tour operator. Furthermore, it was decided to use a part of the time during the post-tour interviews with the tourists in order to pick up on the details that were completed, albeit in a cursory manner, on a questionnaire supplied by the ground operator and a second tour operator questionnaire (only sent in by a minority of the consumers). Therefore, access to the CSQs was not sought from management.

4.5.8 Analysis

Of course, the method of record only acts as the hand-maiden to the subsequent process of analysis. Johnson (1975 : 186-187) was sceptical concerning the ability of a researcher to record reality:

'... we are ill-served by maintaining the illusion that the field-notes and other observational records kept by an observer during a field project approximate a mirror of reality... (data collected) are affected by how the researcher defines the project, how others in the setting define the research, relations of trust, personal feelings... the field worker's feelings of restedness or exhaustion, reactions to particular events, relations with others, consumption of alcoholic beverages... and so forth.'

An awareness of such a viewpoint placed a clear onus on the coherent analysis and interpretation of the observations. This in turn depended in part on the purpose of the research - in the case of the participant observation to provide detailed ethnographic descriptions and analysis of the events and actors in order to reveal and develop - interpret - theoretical understanding. Of course, use was made of the general analytical techniques already outlined.

In the very important *writing process* it was intended to make use of each sort of '*tale*' that can be used in the writing of ethnography. Van Maanen (1988) identified three sorts of tales - *realist, confessional and impressionist* - and suggested (1988 : 47) that: '... realist tales swallow up the fieldworker, and by convention the text focuses almost entirely on the sayings, doings and supposed thinkings of the people studied. Materials are organised according to topics and problems relevant to the fieldworker's conceptual and disciplinary interests. The presence of the author is relegated to very limited accounts of the conditions of fieldwork...'

The confessional tale does not replace the realist tale. Van Maanen elaborated (1988 : 91):

'The confessional attempts to represent the fieldworker's participative presence in the studied scene, the fieldworker's rapport and sensitive contact with others in the world described... the soft subjectivity of the fieldwork experience begins to slip into fieldwork confessions in a way it does not in realist versions of a culture...'

Finally, impressionist tales stand alongside realist and confessional tales. Again in van Maanen's words (1988 : 102):

'Their materials are words, metaphors, phrasings, imagery, and most critically, the expansive recall of fieldwork experience... tightly focused, vibrant, exact, but necessarily imaginative rendering of fieldwork...'

These tales covered the themes that emerged from the thoughts, feelings and actions of the various actors during the successive unfolding of the events on the long-haul tour. Burgess (1984 : 176) suggested that the presentation of data in chronological order was a compromise position - in this instance, however, this was certainly not the case. Chronological ordering and development was one key crux of the whole research.

Accordingly, it is not an indulgence to present a detailed chronological account or tale of the participant observation with relevant, although not overly intrusive analysis in situ (ch. 6). Much is revealed by such a synthesis of details and analysis - and the subsequent interpretation necessarily draws heavily on this source (ch. 7).

4.6 Post-tour interviews

Post-tour interviews were set up by the researcher after completing an extensive period of description and analysis of the EM tour and the construction of the *participant observation narrative* (ch. 6); and after further reworking of the *management interviews* and *literature search*.

The researcher did not reveal the research process of the participant observation to the consumers - it was not considered that this would have added to the research findings. Instead the consumer interviews were conducted on the essentially true pretext that the researcher had been awarded some limited monies to conduct research in to consumer behaviour in tourism - all the interviewees knew that the researcher was employed as a lecturer.

It was only not possible to contact and interview 'Robbi' and 'Marje' (see chapter 6). Otherwise, access was easily granted and the interview time was generous - almost in the extreme. The interviewees were allowed to choose the location and time of the meeting. Whilst it might be useful for each interview to have been conducted in the home of the interviewees - for the same rationale as the management interviewees were always interviewed in their work environment - it was felt that an outright request for such a location might have pushed the boundaries of respect for individual privacy. Accordingly, 'Sinnead', 'Jon' and 'Donald' were interviewed in one of the large bar-cafes typical of Edinburgh where they lived and worked. This location was a suggestion of Donald because the bar-cafes are open well beyond midnight - thus decreasing the pressure on interview time which was necessarily after work hours - and because they offered the chance to have essentially private, undisturbed conversations in a public place. All the other interviews took place, on the suggestion of the interviewees, in their homes. Each interviewee was spoken with individually although the Edinburgh contingent also joined together for a joint session of interviewing. The same process occurred with the husband-wife partnership of Frank and Kate.

The interviews took place between 8-9 months after the participant observation. It might be argued that as such satisfaction may have changed into attitude after such a time period. However, given the need to write the narrative account and also to review the management interviews and literature search there really was no alternative to this time-lag. Moreover, the interviews revealed an astonishing recall of detail - contrary to the suggestion of much of the literature which suggested that there would be a

considerable decay in memory - so that the time-lag did not appear to represent a particular drawback to discussion of CS/D through the EM tour.

The chronology of the tour provided the framework for the interviews. It was thought that a thematic framework might overly impose the thought process of the interviewer and, indeed, the suggestion that the interview might follow the chronological development of the tour was greeted with approval and even some relief by the interviewees.

Insights from the *consumer interviews* were *overwhelmingly corroborative*. This was tacit recognition of the power of the participant observation - a conclusion that was recognised only *after* the consumer interviews and not a conclusion that was intentionally sought. The general intention prior to the interviews had been to integrate any corroboration, refutation or other additional evidence within the *interpretation* (ch. 7). Largely because there was so much corroboration and so little refutation and additional evidence this indeed proved to be a relevant, viable and constructive approach.

The post-tour *management interview* assumed less importance than had been envisaged prior to the participant observation. A manager from the tour operator had been interviewed during the period of extended management interviews and so a baseline of thoughts, feelings and actions with regard to CS/D had been established. The researcher again did not reveal the research process but introduced some of the detail and analysis from the EM tour and some of the emerging thoughts from the interpretation.

4.7 Post script

In sum, it is considered that the methodology behind this research was both soundly and flexibly constructed and applied and was also highly appropriate to the research questions.

Chapter 1 Introduction	Chapter 2 CS/D - Antecedents and antecedent temporal process	Chapter 3 Context	Chapter 4 Methodology	Chapter 5 Management interviews	Chapter 6 Participant observation	Chapter 7 Interpretation	Chapter 8 Final overview
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Overview ◆ Initial purpose ◆ Expectation ◆ Performance ◆ Attribution ◆ Emotion ◆ Equity ◆ Satisfaction and time ◆ Identification/ measurement/analysis of satisfaction 			

Chapter 5: Management Interviews - Description and Analysis

5.0 Overview

Details regarding both practical and academic matters that relate to the research methodology of the extended management interviews have been outlined and discussed (see 4.2). *This chapter seeks to describe and analyse the extended management interviews from the perspective of the researcher prior to the primary research with the consumers - the participant observation and subsequent consumer interviews.* The organisation of the chapter reflects the structure of the interview cover guide (Appendix 3 Document C) which proved to be an effective tool in the discharge of the interviews - even though the various elements of expectation, performance and disconfirmation (expectancy disconfirmation) were sometimes considered by the management in tandem rather than separately.

The term 'consumer' has been used throughout this research thesis. However, management mostly refer to their consumers as 'clients'. Brookes and Stodin (1995) drew out the distinction:

'A customer is one who gives custom, or business patronage... (clientship) denote(s) a relationship with professional advisers, whose advice guides (and protects) the individual ... (and also) implies the adviser has superior knowledge in a particular domain...'

It was considered that the use of the term 'client' was in itself revealing - with the implication that management understood consumer requirements better than the consumer.

5.1 Initial Response - What is satisfaction?

The incomplete nature of the initial response by the interviewees to the question of what constituted satisfaction has already been noted (see 4.2.3). However, there is some value in recording such an initial response. Although the researcher confidently doubts that the interviewees spent much time specifically preparing their answers prior to the interview they would nevertheless have either read the letter requesting an interview or would have noted and/or recorded the telephone request.

The role of *expectations* and/or *expectancy disconfirmation* frequently came to the fore at this stage of the interview before any more direct query attempted to elicit a specific response - an implied link was made between expectations and performance, disconfirmation and satisfaction by a number of the interviewees. According to one of

these, 'satisfaction has occurred when clients write in and say that the trip has matched their expectations'. Of course, if such a proactive response was indeed the true measure of satisfaction there can be no doubt that the percentage level of consumer satisfaction in any tour operator would be extremely low. A strong link was also drawn between expectancy disconfirmation and satisfaction by considering that satisfaction was 'meeting the criteria as set out in the brochure and the tour dossier (sent out on request)'. Further, one other interviewee added that 'satisfaction does not necessarily mean enjoyment ... one can enjoy a tour without being satisfied'.

Another common response was that satisfaction was essentially *repeat business / custom* - although the caveat was added that the repeat occasion 'may be some years down the line in this type of business'. Of course, a response that referred to repeat business showed a concern with preferred consumer intention and did not directly resemble the definitions of satisfaction that emerged from the literature review. This view of satisfaction as repeat business was more of a management centred view of the usefulness of satisfaction. It looked to the future and specifically to the future survival of the business. *Interviewees were not satisfied just when their consumers were satisfied but also required that the consumers were so satisfied that repeat custom would occur.*

In a similar vein perhaps the true value of the praise within the consumer letters that were passed around the office at one tour operator was in reminding the HQ staff of the satisfaction that could be gained from their product - this was management satisfaction that spun off from consumer satisfaction. Indeed, this was recognised as such by another interviewee in a different tour operator who apparently arranged for a summary of good points from CSQs to be sent around the offices in order 'to keep up morale'.

One interviewee attempted to establish whether the purpose of the interviews was to focus on management views of consumer satisfaction or consumer views of satisfaction on a long-haul tour. The implication seemed to be that the two views were not indistinguishable or synonymous. As established earlier all preparatory contact always stated that the intention was to consider management views of consumer satisfaction. In a response to a written query this operator made a further comment in a follow-up letter:

'There is no genuine difference between the management and the client perception of satisfaction. I merely meant that satisfaction for the client is a more emotive issue, eg. if the holiday is a success it was a wonderful, life enhancing experience (or a dreadful disaster and total waste of money).

Management's criteria are that it is a success if it was run on schedule, on budget and there were no complaints'.

5.2 Expectation

5.2.1 Brochures

5.2.2 Tour Operator Contact

5.2.3 Retail Travel Agents

5.2.4 Consumer Events

A number of common themes emerged from clearly stated management views of consumer expectation notwithstanding one candidly expressed view that consumers did not know what to expect. *In general, expectations were considered to emerge from either brochures and other printed materials, indirect (or sometimes direct) contact with tour operator sales staff / consultants, direct contact with retail travel agents, other events generated by tour operators such as consumer evenings, and the effect of 'word of mouth'.* On the other hand, one interviewee followed a more alternative view similar to that of a minority of theorists:

'Satisfaction is not matched up with expectation - clients expect the unexpected. If a trip is not satisfactory one has done appallingly; if one gets a satisfactory rating then one has done well enough. So, one has to be very truly satisfactory.'

Of course, among the minority view there was no absolute consensus as to the exact balance of the elements controlling expectation. It was generally felt though by the smaller scale, more specialist long-haul niche operators that true expectations were not so likely to emerge from consumer contact with retail travel agents - particularly representatives of the 'multiples' as opposed to select 'independents'.

Herein lies, perhaps, one example of the distinctive character of the context affecting satisfaction with long-haul ITs compared to short haul ITs. The market for the latter tends to be dominated by major operators that are often vertically integrated with multiple retail travel agents whereas the former are still represented by a more notable proportion of the small scale, specialist niche operators and independent retail travel agents.

5.2.1 Brochures

Brochures and other printed materials were considered to be of major importance in determining consumer expectations although there were no operators that relied solely on brochures for this purpose. Although expectations were considered by one interviewee to be 'controlled' by brochures it became apparent that this was not truly the case. Several other methods were used which also attempted to exert some control.

Attention was drawn in a number of cases to the attempts that were made within the brochures to temper consumer expectations. As one interviewee said:

'Complainants often state that 'their dream was not met' ... one is delivering dreams. (The company I work for) attempts to create realistic dreams by the input of a 'Travel-Wise' section in their brochure - but this is not always read'.

This last sentiment was repeated almost verbatim elsewhere. Reference was made to: ' 'items' placed in the brochure which fill in information on specific places. The trouble is that clients do not always read these items'.

Such attempts at realism occasionally appeared to weary some interviewees who hankered for the more free spirit of other days that were less constricted by legislation. One interviewee commented:

'(Now) clients are much more aware of their rights - well, that is how it should be - and check whether they are getting what they were offered There is now legislation regarding what you can and cannot put in to a brochure whereas formerly you put in whatever you wanted to - *and we did!*'

On one occasion an interviewee was particularly pessimistic about the role of the brochure in generating reasonable expectations although one could confidently suggest that such an opinion was borne out of the less than rounded view of the interviewee from the job perspective of a customer complaints manager - the interviewee was lower in the managerial hierarchy than any other interviewee. Certainly the strength of the view was not matched in any other instance:

'Expectations are not true expectations because clients do not read the brochure and, in particular, the back few pages. Some clients do not read up on the destination that they are going to - you'd have thought that they would.... We send clients to relevant NTO's for more information (though we do have a back-up leaflet)'.

By contrast there was a rather more up-beat mood elsewhere:

'There is a section in the brochure that outlines the negative points about a destination. So, people get a better view about what they are letting themselves in for. If a walking tour will get up to 9,000 feet

and there will be ice in the wash-basin in the morning then the client can accordingly choose to go for a beach holiday in the Seychelles... and thoroughly enjoy it. Consequently there is not a mismatch between expectations and what they (the clients) get.'

Other printed materials can also affect expectations. Accordingly it was reported that: 'Further information on the trip is also sent after booking ... though as much information as possible is placed in to the brochure per se'.

In a similar vein, one operator sent out a 'tour dossier' on request after booking.

Both in an interview and in a later public lecture, one interviewee confirmed that the preceding year had been a period when the operator attempted to improve its 'documentation' - brochures, travel notes and travel wallets. The CSQ summary for Jan.- June 1994 showed a 5% increase in satisfaction with such aspects of the product. It was considered that this was a 'significant' increase. One could speculate that such an increase might be determined by a closer match of consumer expectations and reality related to the improved documentation although the nature of the survey did not prove or disprove such a comment.

Be that as it may, perhaps the key point from the interviews was a management feeling that they had an element of control over expectations. They certainly appeared to put in some attempt to ensure that such an element was in place.

5.2.2 Tour Operator Contact

Tour operator contact involved direct face to face contact as well as rather more indirect contact through the telephone. The internet was not a real option at the time of the interviews - the mid 1990s.

One interviewee specifically raised the role of telephone reservation staff from the tour operator in the creation of expectation. As the interviewee bluntly expounded:

'Some specialist travel agents carry our product - but you cannot expect the travel agent to say useful things.'

Clearly, in this case, there was a strong belief that expectations were best created by the *creators* of the product - the tour operator rather than the retail travel agent. This was not a universal view although one interviewee stated that:

'...obvious problems occur with regard to advice etc. when an agent advises clients.'

Furthermore, the same operator had recently instigated a change towards the employment of specialised sales managers who would be a first line of contact with

potential consumers - cutting-out straightforward administrative staff who were not considered to have sufficient practical product experience.

Every operator employed a system that was similar in many respects - even if it was not entirely the same. At the time of the interview, for example, one interviewee reported that there were thirteen front-line consultants on the end of telephone lines in the tour operator head office. These consultants, who worked in teams organised by geographical area, were supposed to have first-hand knowledge of operations in the destination area per se (perhaps from their own travels). They dealt with requests from travel agents who then secured the purchase. Another interviewee described a situation in which the 'reservations people' worked on the telephone but did other things as well. They were joined with 'Operations' and also had the opportunity to travel. In an appropriate case they could also take a tour as a tour manager. With specific regard to expectations the interviewee considered that this improved the quality of the information that they were able to give on the telephone.

Such indirect contact via the telephone also had a very different purpose than that intimated above. One interviewee made it clear that the telephone consultants, known as 'inside sales consultants' were trained to 'pressure and close' sales rather than act in an advisory role.

Direct contact between consumers and tour operators might also occur at consumer events (detailed below). There was also, of course, the possibility that consumers could visit the offices of the tour operator concerned. However, in the majority of cases this did not often happen.

Both direct and indirect tour operator contact could potentially involve some element of advice away from the product on sale. Evidence of such occurrence was alluded to on a number of occasions. One interviewee suggested that:

'Independent sort of people may be pushed towards a series of short, connecting tours rather than a long tour... (but) a 70 year old may find the forming of new friends or dealing with new coach captains to be too demanding and would be encouraged to stay on just one (long) tour.'

The interviewees also offered a number of specific illustrations. One recalled that a sixty year old tourist was asked to sign a declaration that she would not inhibit the liberal spirit of one particular tour. This was a condition of booking.

5.2.3 Retail Travel Agents

Tour operator contact with consumers might also occur at one further step removed. Travel agents might act as intermediaries in response to specific queries from travel agent consumers. The benefit of consumer contact with retail travel agents was frequently viewed with some degree of scepticism. This was greatest with the more specialist, small scale long-haul niche tour operators.

Nearly all the interviewees were of the opinion that *independent* retail travel agents were better at conveying information across to the consumer than *multiple* agents - although some of the tour operators were on the preferred list of customers with a multiple retail travel agent. Accordingly, in these cases the comparison between the individual retail travel agents and the multiple retail travel agents was based on actual practical experience.

Despite some clear disadvantages with the system these operators and others had a programme of so-called travel agent 'training' in order to acquaint the sales consultants with the product. These were considered to be successful. By way of example, details were given of a recent programme. One full day event was held at the Royal Geographical Society for 200 travel agents. In addition, there were also familiarisation tours for travel agents. It was added that '... they (the travel agents) do not get drunk every night - they really work'. Finally, a tour operator representative was also assigned to service the 500 or so travel agents with whom the operator regularly worked.

Another interviewee also detailed a similar sort of system with about six specific day events per annum. However, she questioned the use of representatives and stated that the multiples did not encourage representatives to visit. Accordingly, the operator also employed other tactics to increase the awareness of sales consultants - such as competitions in the trade press which tested a consultant's knowledge of operator brochures.

A number of summary threads emerged from the opinions of another interviewee. It was emphasised that:

'... the multiples sell the product but do not get over much information, whilst the independents are the best for conveying information'.

However, contrary to the other operators this operator made considerable use of a representative system. The operator distributed about 1.4 million brochures per

annum. They had a grading system that described retail travel agents / wholesalers on a response scale from A-Z and representatives made about 50 visits each week to travel agents and wholesalers. In addition, they organised 'roadshows' in conjunction with other interested supplier groups - one such Canada and USA roadshow was co-sponsored by the Canadian Tourist Office and Tennessee Tourism among others - for the retail travel agents and wholesalers. Over the immediate period following the interview January 17 - February 02 1995, for example, the Canada and USA roadshow visited eight venues in Southern England.

Again the key point seemed to be that tour operators sought to control expectations by whatever means suited their own operation. It did not matter that one system was different from another. It mattered that tour operators all sought control.

5.2.4 Consumer Events

Sales representatives also had direct contact with potential consumers. Such contact was clearly viewed as important in the tour operators which adopted such a method. 'Roadshows', for example, were not just confined to retail agents. The idea of the roadshow was also extended to consumer evenings. Such pro-active consumer contact was often considered to be one of the main reasons for the strength of bookings. In addition, these bookings were presumed to be based on realistic/enhanced consumer expectations. As an example, one interviewee detailed how a year round series of 'slide shows' had been developed both in London and at a large number of other venues. These were clearly aimed at providing the necessary consumer back-up. A reservation leaflet detailed how the slide shows included many different aspects of what was called the tour operator's 'concept'. Information was provided on 'special interests, activities, small group adventures, leaders, accommodation, transportation, and a profile of the kind of people who travel with us'. Time was allocated at the end of the slide show for informal questions and the interviewee suggested that one important component of such shows was the presence in the audience of tourists who had already experienced the product - these people could positively influence potential new customers.

5.3 Performance

5.3.1 Consumer

5.3.2 Consumer service personnel

5.3.3. Logistics and technical aspects

5.3.1 Consumer

The role of the consumer in performance clearly emerged from the management interviews. It was suggested that the best consumers were those who '... get on with it and do the achieving themselves.' Many examples were given:

'We need clients who read up before and really want to go... there is greater satisfaction as a result.... It is possible to get stuck in some mud - not just figuratively on overland tours - and consider that it is a good laugh or, alternatively, to consider that it is a real down point...'

In the view of some interviewees *consumer production* was a central part of the tour operator ethos:

' (The tour operator) recognises the intelligence of a client. Rather than a historical and boring tour at a particular destination, a tour leader may point the way to some place but then leave the clients on their own - exploring as they wish, using their own map and so on...'

The 'gel' of the group was also stressed as a part of the production sometimes even as the most important element determining satisfaction:

'Clients do act as producers - going to get a spare fan-belt or whatever. Group involvement is crucial... the experience of travelling in a group creates life-long friendships and enhances the whole experience... consider the extra dimension of being in a desert with a group of people rather than on your own... at least after a day or two when the solitary experience would begin to pall...'

Another interviewee commented:

'Group dynamics are important - every group, possibly because consumers assume particular roles, seems to have a joker, a complainer, an extrovert etc.'

So the overall view of management was that consumers *did* produce and that consumer competence in production affected satisfaction - even though one of the central paradoxes that emerged in a notable number of examples was that the consumer of the 1990s liked to produce *fast*. In comparison with the 1960s the consumer sought an *instant* response and an *instant* experience:

'In the 1960's it would have been inconceivable to fly to Morocco on an overland tour - the first part of the journey would have been (travelling) down through Europe...'

5.3.2 Consumer service personnel

A notable feature in a considerable number of interviews was the close intertwining of performance in general with the specific performance of consumer service personnel. Perhaps this should not come as a surprise in an industry that can be so reliant in certain instances on consumer-employee relationships.

For example, an interviewee from one leading operator of overland tours by truck gave a detailed account of driver training as a means of differentiating the company from its competitors and accounting for consumer satisfaction with the product. Drivers first spent a total of 6-8 months in the 'workshops'. Here the overland trucks came in at the end of one trek and were prepared for a subsequent trek. The trainees learned all about the mechanics of the trucks via a truck service programme, carried out inventories and put on stores. They also got practical advice on medical problems that could arise (some prescribed drugs were carried in the truck), group involvement (for example, how to integrate group members) and sales and marketing. Furthermore the trainees were also assigned to the main office for a period of time in order to ensure that they could work with women (51% of clients were women and the majority of the drivers were men). In addition, the operator picked up information on driver interests during the training (wild life / history and so on) which could then be used in order to decide on driver destination - drivers were obliged to give a presentation on one of their interests to their fellow trainees. Finally, drivers went on the road as a 'shadow' for 3-4 months. The aim was to induct novice drivers on a return trip (eg Nairobi to London) although this was not always possible. Accordingly, the whole training process could take up to one year.

It was clear from this account that driver training involved a full range of technical aspects and problems that could confront a driver on an overland trek. Training also emphasised the importance of consumer-employee and consumer-consumer relationships. Additionally, training and advice came via a variety of sources - from existing truck drivers on site through to Company Directors. Company ethos was thus instilled. Each of these components of training was set in place as a management response to what they considered to be the performance needs.

An emphasis on the role of the driver, the customer service person most obviously connected with their groups, also came through from other overland tours and not only those in trucks. One interviewee from a tour operator that made considerable use of coaches across Australia stated that:

'The 'coach captain' (the driver and leader of the coach tours) is the key individual. He is knowledgeable, generates team spirit and so on, gives the commentary... he is the major satisficer. As for dis-satisficers... (you) will not find a poor coach captain.'

Such an emphasis on a consumer service person - again a driver - was repeated with a more exclusive operator in which transport was also a particularly important component. Throughout Africa, India and in Thailand / Hong Kong the operator did all of their own ground operating - supposedly to ensure that there was a tight control over the consumer experience. They trained their own drivers and indeed the interviewee stated that:

'...the whole driver aspect of the operation is run as a military sort of activity... creases down their trousers / light beige uniform / badge. Drivers are responsible for their own vehicle... look after the vehicle themselves... learn about flora and fauna, vegetation and the like, tribal and colonial history, they can even discourse on the exchange fluctuation in Kenya.'

Elsewhere, the control was not so tight and thus in South America (except Antarctica) the operator supposedly worked with a company run by a long established expatriate. The key point was to establish the best ground operation in the business and certainly the benefit of direct control was to emerge with full force and clarity during the participant observation.

The role of other key personnel in the field was also emphasised. One interviewee in a tour operator that employed a 'tour leader' and a 'tour administrator' isolated their role as being 'crucial' in determining performance. It was stated that the tour leader had to have 'person management skills' and also had to rely a lot on prior experience. An incident was detailed on one special interest tour which was looking at wild flowers. The appearance of the flowers was late because of long snows. Accordingly, the guide prepared the consumers about the situation and so the disappointment was to some extent alleviated. Indeed, some flowers were eventually found:

'The tour leader must be someone who can keep the group together - it is a rather concentrated period.'

This was the performance element that was considered to be 'crucial' in affecting satisfaction.

Another interviewee mentioned the effect of three factors on performance - the time at the airport, flights and the tour 'manager'. The emphasis in the interview, however, was

placed on the tour manager. It was not imperative for these managers to have travel experience themselves when they were first contracted. Rather, they had to have first hand experience in dealing with people. They had to deal with all the potential problems - the sudden non availability of a hotel, a client death or heart attack and so on. Further, one of their roles was to integrate their guests - except in some locations where this was just not possible - around the same table or whatever. At the same time the tour managers also encouraged the guests to be independent. Clearly, there was a necessity here for managers to be good at both organisation and at promoting inter-personal relationships among guests.

A couple of other interviewees did not put a stress on the contribution of the tour leader - although this was not matched in the brochures and other literature produced by the tour operators who employed the interviewees. Accordingly this was not considered to be definitively related to the perceived inadequacies that eventually emerged, justifiably or not, on a tour run by one of the operators and studied by the researcher in the participant observation case study. Additionally, both operators had their own training programmes and the interviewee from the case study operator talked about an initial three hour 'grilling' for potential tour leaders followed by 'in-house' and subsequent 'on the job' training. The other interviewee outlined the technical training of the tour leaders and the policy to recruit experienced travellers who 'know what it is like out there' and who were able to get on with others. This interviewee did not place much emphasis on training in psychology - eg courses in group dynamics. Rather, it was said that 'a good tour manager is like a good teacher - you either are a good tour manager or you are not'. Relevantly, the interviewee from the case study operator, who had come into the tourism industry via teaching, also added to this analogy by drawing a parallel between the service contact element in tourism and that in education:

'The sort of clients that come to (our tour operator) can smell out a poor operator in the same way that children can smell out a poor teacher.'

5.3.3. Logistics and technical aspects

With regard to logistics one interviewee stated that:

'... the clients are most interested in the tour going exactly as set out in the itinerary - even though the product is sold as 'adventure'.'

This seemed to suggest that there were other key elements determining performance apart from customer competence and the performance of customer service personnel.

This came through most strongly and surprisingly in the interview with one manager from an operator that had publicly attached a very high profile to customer service

personnel and their role in performance although in fairness the interviewee's position (unique among all of the interviewees) was that he was speaking for himself and not for the operator:

'... the 'ideal / dream holiday' of consumers is a 'hassle free' sort of holiday - hassle free from door to door'.

This dream supposedly required an emphasis on *logistics* and *technical* aspects - but clear limitations existed. Whilst, according to the interviewee, the operator was careful in, say, the initial choice of hotel they could not control 'performance delivery' elements once the hotel had a contract. Customer service personnel were not all trained by the tour operator. Furthermore, the operator had no representatives in the long-haul destinations. This was because of cost. Instead they contracted ground handling agents who supplied representatives as part of the contract. All of this would seem to seriously hinder the considerations and ambitions of the interviewee - although the general point was firmly held and logically argued. There seemed to be many occasions when performance delivery by non operator employees could fail to meet pre-arranged standards - with a consequent effect on satisfaction.

The earlier description of the tour operator with nearly all its own ground operations (see 5.3.2) appeared to reach closer toward the 'hassle free' experience envisaged above. Indeed, the interviewee offered further examples of the control exerted by the tour operator - for example, it had ownership of safari lodges in South Africa and river boats on the Nile. Here appeared to be a *blend* of control that involved both *customer service personnel* and *facilities*.

5.4 Attribution

There was no absolute consensus as regards the locus of either positive or negative attribution although the majority of managers considered that negative attribution (blame) was misplaced. It was implied throughout that such blame attribution had an effect - although not an invariable effect - on satisfaction / dis-satisfaction.

One overland tour operator considered that consumers could be satisfied if a trip delivered what the brochure claimed. If something then went wrong the consumers did not apportion blame on the tour operator. The point was exemplified by referring to an ongoing situation in which the tour operator consumers were unable to move overland from Pakistan to India because of political tension and, specifically, a health epidemic in Pakistan. The tour operator was, therefore, having to relocate a truck, fly its clients across the border and, quite possibly, pay for the food and other requirements for extra

days on the road. It was clearly being put to a great deal of trouble and expense. According to the interviewee, consumers could see that this was the case and were more angry with the Pakistani authorities than with the tour operator.

Another interviewee specifically stated that blame was incorrectly apportioned because consumers did not read the brochure.

A further interviewee also had some similar views. A case was recounted from a situation in Chile. Consumers complained about a cold night spent on a ferry. The interviewee contended that the relevant brochure drew attention to the variation in the timing of ferry crossings. Furthermore, the interviewee stated that even the Chilean ferry operators did not know much in advance of one month when the ferries would run. On the other hand, the interviewee did qualify this view by stating that it was necessary to separate out blame that was attached whilst consumers were still on the road and blame that was attached some time after an immediate experience was over. It was more likely, according to the interviewee, that the latter case was one that should be more closely looked in to:

'...if someone writes in after about 4 months then they are really concerned about that complaint'.

Another interviewee from an overland tour operator linked the correct apportionment of blame to consumer type. The interviewee, a founder director of the tour operator, distinguished between the 'old style' and the 'new style' consumer. The old style consumer could tell when something was the fault of the tour operator compared to when something was caused by some external factor. Accordingly, they give the benefit of the doubt to the tour operator. The new style consumer was unable to make the same distinction. He/she was from a broader base of the population and in the words of the interviewee may have 'graduated' from a mass tour operator.

In a follow-up letter the interviewee expanded on the theme of attribution - this time without making the specific distinction between the old style and the new style consumer:

'... the logistics of organising, and therefore buying, a holiday are highly complex, and there are many possibilities for problems. What problems there are can partly be avoided by intelligent staff, good planning, training, technology, etc., but we can never take away the possibility of things going wrong. To the client it always looks like our fault, whereas the reality is often different.'

The interviewee at one very different tour operator, a large scale organisation with a wide product portfolio and most probably very different consumer profiles and needs

seemed to corroborate this last view. It was stated that consumers blamed the tour operator even when the problem was patently outside of their control. Reference was made to an example in St. Lucia during which consumer holidays were affected by bad weather and a breakdown of water supplies. According to the interviewee there was a perception that 'long-haul' meant perfect weather. However, this was just not the case - St. Lucia, for example, was prone to tropical storms. The interviewee reckoned that St. Lucia coped better than England would cope in a similar situation but that consumers were still not too pleased that they had no running water for three days.

The interviewee at a small/medium sized, specialist, culture based, upmarket tour operator specifically mentioned how tour managers could get blamed even when, as with a flight delay or something else that was wrong with a flight, it was not the tour manager that was to blame. At face value it would seem from this case that attribution theory was not working - although it is feasible to point out that a tour manager is a representative of a tour operator and the possibility of a delay is raised and lowered according to the airline used by a tour operator. This point had some pertinence to some of the consumers involved in the participant observation (ch.6).

One interviewee implied that the effect of a misplaced locus of blame led to a decrease in satisfaction. In an interesting example from a recent accident that had occurred in the Sinai Peninsula, Egypt - (a bus was swept away in a flash flood) - the interviewee, who did not have consumers involved in the accident, described the management response that she would have been instituted in order to avoid a negative attribution:

'.. the company concerned merely sent out insurance documents to the people involved... we (one of the tour operator Directors) would probably have met the clients at the airport... and would have sent flowers and a follow-up letter say two weeks after their return...'

Aside from management, the customer service personnel might also allay negative attribution. Not surprisingly, the tour leader or equivalent emerged as a central figure in this process - in a number of examples a clear example of a 'halo effect' was created:

'... lots else can go awry and not lead to too much comeback if the coach captain is a good one'.

In other words, a negative experience or set of negative experiences were offset by a positive experience with the tour leader. Only partly in jest, one interviewee confided that he always paid attention to the expenses account of the tour leader - a large bill suggested that there was a need to keep the customers happy in difficult circumstances.

5.5 Emotion

'Tourism is all about emotion - why else would someone pay £2,000 for something that they had not seen?'

Such straightforward logic from management interviewees was difficult to refute but despite such a rhetorical question the role of emotion was not expressed as often as the other supposed antecedents covered so far - expectations, performance and attribution.

However, a number of the managers considered that the early stage of the tour was often a period of particular emotion. One interviewee elaborated:

'Pre-booking is a period of excitement. The early stage with the tour leader is also a period of excitement... and fear.'

This 'fear' was similar to the 'nervousness' outlined by one interviewee and related to the 'blank darkness' recognised by another interviewee at the beginning of a tour.

Interestingly, maybe even significantly, there was no direct mention by management of the emotional strain inherent in the formation of relationships within the tourism group - the 'blank darkness' was supposedly affected in part by the lack of meaning attached to upcoming place destinations. On the other hand, tour leader selection and training in the various interviewee tour operators was orientated at least in part to group dynamics - perhaps tacit recognition of the potential for such strain. Also a number of the interviewees mentioned the close involvement between the consumers and the tour operator employee who most influenced day to day activity - the tour leader / tour administrator / tour representative / coach captain or whomever.

A close interest in the success of the tourism *activity* that was largely driven by *intrinsic motivation* and which led to increased pleasure and arousal might also be inferred from the numerous comments of the interviewees:

'Satisfaction comes, for example from reaching the summit of a hill trek and getting the resultant sense of achievement.'

A range of other such comments that illustrated the role of tourism consumers as producers have already been inserted - this in itself suggests that the boundary line between the antecedents may be more *illusory* than *real*. Indeed, the 'flower' narrative (see 5.3.2) of the interviewee not only represents the role of the tour leader / tour administrator in performance but might also be used as a clear illustration of the interlinkage between expectation, performance, attribution and emotion.

In one sense, perhaps it was not surprising that management was more reticent about comments on emotion than the other antecedents. After all, this would be entirely consistent with the seeming desire of management to seek *control* wherever possible. Emotional states and emotional traits might well be considered by management to be less controllable than, say, expectations - controlled by the brochure, other documentation, consumer evenings and so forth. On the other hand, there did not appear to be much hidden depth in the limited comments that were made by management on emotion - certainly less depth than lay behind comments on the other antecedents - *the language of emotional states and traits, categories and dimensions seemed to be distant from management thought. It was assumed that the participant observation and subsequent analysis and interpretation would help to determine whether such a distance between the theorists and reality had any impact whatsoever on the management understanding of consumer satisfaction.*

5.6 Equity

The role of equity as an antecedent of satisfaction was very much interpreted rather than directly expressed from the conversation with management - the term 'equity' was one that was not as accessible as terms such as 'expectation' and 'performance' which were more part of management terminology. Nevertheless, management thoughts on consumer equity in which consumers supposedly compared their inputs and outputs (with a focus on the outputs of fairness and justice) with the inputs and outputs of others - consumers, consumer service personnel and management as well as the host population - were certainly apparent.

Such cross comparison between consumers was most clearly expressed by management with regard to group dynamics. It has been established that management viewed consumers as producers and this extended from banal activities such as food preparation on an overland tour through to the more subtle integration of the more withdrawn consumers with the more extrovert consumers. The onus for such integration also partly lay with the tour leader or equivalent and consumers were supposedly aware of attempts to forge such integration and judged the tour leader accordingly.

Management further claimed that the onus for integration also lay with themselves at one step removed from the tourism experience per se. In particular, it has been shown that management were sometimes concerned to advise older consumers in advance of the liberal ethos of some overland tours. Also, some concern was expressed by one

interviewee of the injustice and unfairness that was prone to occur following management decisions to discount certain tourism products. This invariably caused friction between consumers because discounting broke down segmentation boundaries: '... clients do not always mix - particularly when holidays are sold off at a discount which then mixes up different sorts of people. Both sides complain. (I) do not like such snobbery - but there is nothing that can be done...'

This, of course, missed the point that discounting could be discontinued. This would remove consumer distress - one of the emotional responses supposedly associated with equity.

The more positive role of management with regard to equity was seen in the case of the attempts of one operator to move their consumers away from political instability and a health epidemic in Pakistan. Although the details of this example have already been outlined with regard to attribution it is clear that the operator also displayed an equitable, proactive stance towards its consumers in an attempt to remove distress.

A stated sense of equity towards consumers also emerged in the role of management with regard to brochure production and the 'negative marketing' within brochures - albeit a recent development prompted in part by changes in the law and in part by consumers who are more aware of their rights with regard to justice and fairness. Some sense of equity was also displayed by interviewees with regard to the post tour complaints of some consumers - although the exact balance of equity and inequity varied.

Some interviewees also identified the need for equity between consumers and the host population. One interviewee stressed that the tour leaders were generally locals - except in a new destination such as Vietnam or a destination such as China in which the tour operator had failed to instill operator values. The researcher sent a later written question:

'Is there a link with satisfaction here or is there some other reason for this policy?'

The interviewee replied:

'1. Satisfaction 2. Sustainable tourism 3. Fair trading 4. Financial. '

With the assumption that the interviewee was aware of customer requirements it could be suggested that the stress on local tour leaders was a response to *customer* satisfaction with such an emphasis - the reverse it must be stated of the more supposedly xenophobic requirements of customers mentioned by one other interviewee. Both polar extremes are bound closely with equity - even if the latter does not help to create an equitable relationship with the host population. Certainly, too, an

emphasis on sustainable tourism and fair trading are *overtly* concerned with fairness and justice - and the possible removal of any resentment between consumers and the tour operator on the one hand and the host population on the other.

5.7 Satisfaction and time

5.7.1 Pre-tour, departure and pre-arrival

5.7.2 Beyond arrival

5.7.1 Pre-tour, departure and pre-arrival

There did not seem to be any systematic research carried out by the operators on satisfaction change through time. One interviewee was ready to assert that she had no particular knowledge of how satisfaction changed during the duration of a tour.

However, there was certainly a strong suggestion by a considerable number of operators that the consumer experience was initiated well before the arrival stage in a destination.

Another interviewee candidly related that tour leaders often mentioned all sorts of consumer complaints regarding booking procedures and flights. It was stated that this could have an effect on the length of time that it took for a consumer to become a part of the tourism experience.

It appeared that one interviewee had already concentrated particular thought and action on the various stages that arose prior to arrival at a destination. In particular, he stated that the booking procedure needed to be smooth. If there were what he termed 'hassles' at this stage the consumer began to think that there could be something wrong with the product.

Further, the interviewee identified:

'...a tremendous stress right at the beginning (of a holiday) ... getting to the airport on time / parking the car / getting through passport control etc. This is a hassle. The ideal would be to get shot of this hassle'.

Accordingly, the interviewee suggested that the tour operator might need to start transporting people to the airport - for example, by offering subsidised taxis. Of course, such an approach would be anathema to other operators.

On board the departing flight, the same interviewee continued, there was general relief that the first 'ordeal' had been coped with. Consequently, on the flight itself, expectations were high. - although this was not the same on the return journey and the interviewee believed that '...coming back is a problem as it is even more 'long-haul' than going out' - a view endorsed by other interviewees. Satisfaction, therefore, diminished. The key quest of consumers according to the interviewee - based on the tour operator's own research not just intuition - was a hassle free service. The pre-arrival stage was one flash point of hassle. Of course, it could be argued that such a service quest might only be possible on top brand and tailor-made products. On the other hand, the augmented product of today is the core product of tomorrow or the day after tomorrow - accordingly such a presumed quest seems to be worth consideration.

Other interviewees also mentioned that consumers had to get off to a good start with an operator. One understated example enforced the point:

'... if a client wants to go from Heathrow but only Gatwick is available it would be good if Heathrow could become available'.

Additionally, one interviewee from an up-market niche long-haul operator, made a number of other time related points from this stage that paralleled many of those above. 'Dissatisfaction' (a term introduced by the interviewee) at an early stage could occur when a consumer failed to get a brochure or did not receive confirmation following a booking. However, this was said to be easily dealt with by means of a telephone call. Further dissatisfaction could occur, according to the interviewee, if the operator did not meet their consumers at the departure airport. The tour operator relied on the ability of their consumers to get to the airport themselves. Whilst no direct concern was expressed that this was a particular 'hassle' in the terms of the interviewee above, it did seem that the importance attached to the pre-departure meeting with consumers at the airport was an acknowledgement of the importance of the pre-departure stage. The tour operator supposedly recognised potential fault points and attempted to ensure that consumers were not dissatisfied prior to departure.

5.7.2 Beyond arrival

With an analogy to teaching one interviewee from a tour operator that specialised in small group exploratory tours focussed on the importance of the first hour and the first day of a tour. Such a focus was not uncommon - one other interviewee concentrated on the first 2/3 days of a vacation. Both considered that the tone of a trip was set

during this stage. They said that it was possible to lose the confidence of the consumers if things went wrong - for example, if the trekking ponies did not turn up at the start of a trek. Satisfaction would accordingly deteriorate.

Another interviewee emphasised the importance of the early stage but suggested that this was followed by a mid-tour sink or low and, subsequently, by a rise in satisfaction as the end of the tour approached. This was particularly the case if there had been a good 'gel' among the tour participants.

Another interviewee, by contrast, did not identify any specific rise and fall of satisfaction through time. He made the point that all contact with staff was important - from the initial telephone inquiry onward.

After outlining her perception of the various satisfactions and dissatisfactions one interviewee suggested that there was a wave of euphoria at the end of a vacation. The tour operator responded to this by ensuring that consumers received a 'welcome home pack'. At this stage they were likely to book a further holiday or pass on the tour operator name to friends.

Some contrast to these views was provided by an interviewee who considered that it was the unexpected experience that 'throws' the consumers. Circumstances beyond the control of the tour operator could create the unexpected - Government departments, for example, had been known to take over a hotel at short notice even though the tour operator had a prior booking and so the expected hotel was not available. Flight delays also came into the category of the 'unexpected'. So, the interviewee did not recognise a common pattern of rising and falling satisfaction through time - a view that was not supported by most of the other interviewees.

5.8 Identification/measurement/analysis of satisfaction

5.8.1 CSQs

5.8.2 Tour leader reports

5.8.3 Consumer letters

5.8.4 Other approaches

There were a range of techniques that were used by management in order to measure satisfaction. The most frequently cited of these included customer service questionnaires (CSQs), tour manager reports, and consumer letters.

5.8.1 CSQs

It was expected from the earlier exploratory management interviews that CSQs would be the most common pro-active method of data collection. For example, one interviewee reported that CSQs were sent out with the tickets (90% via travel agents) and that there was a six monthly statistical analysis. Another interviewee outlined how CSQs were distributed at the start of the tour and then sealed and delivered to the destination HQ either through the post or through a csp intermediary. Periodic 'sales conferences' dealt with the results.

Other interviewees hinted towards an *ad hoc subjective approach to CSQs*. In one case the interviewee 'eyeballed' all the questionnaires and suggested that it was possible to question a tour leader, change a future itinerary, or make personal contact with a consumer at home regarding some particular comment or happening based on such eyeballing. Another interviewee mentioned that one person was deployed to look at all the CSQs, acknowledge them all and answer any queries - again a rather subjective approach.

There was at least one clear example of the sort of non-use of the CSQs that had been observed in the exploratory interviews - one operator had *40 years worth* of CSQs available but did not clarify whether the information was used in any productive fashion and appeared to rely most heavily on the 'copious notes' of tour leaders and tour administrators.

Another interviewee was openly sceptical of the exact account that was taken of the CSQ. Perhaps this scepticism came from a position one step down the management hierarchy although there was a further stinging criticism of CSQs from the interviewee

at the helm of the tour operator with the most sophisticated statistical system of CSQ analysis:

'The problem is that CSQs are backward looking. It is imperative that an organisation looks forward - for example, by having brainstorming on 'augmentation'.

Finally, CSQs were not used by a number of the operators. One operator apparently considered that the cost of analysis was too great; another felt that such forms of assessment tended to raise issues that otherwise would remain dormant; and another perceived that their use ran contrary to the ethos of the operator - the founders had an 'absolute abhorrence' of CSQs (a view not held by the interviewee).

Much of this evidence strengthened the original decision to avoid the use of CSQs as a research methodology. It seemed that there were serious doubts from management experience with regard to their usefulness - even in those cases in which CSQs apparently formed an integral part of consumer evaluation.

5.8.2 Tour leader reports

Tour leader reports were a common method of receiving information on the various tours although they were by no means as ubiquitous as had been thought at the outset of the research.

Both direct and indirect information was supplied on satisfaction in the reports. One interviewee provided an illustrative summary of the role that was played by the reports. They were not filed in a rigorously systematic fashion and tended to be more detailed if a tour was new or if there was a problem to cover - the tour leaders were 'watching their backs'. Tour leader accounts also provided management with indirect suggestions on the progress of the tour. There were some claims from a few of the other interviewees that the whole process of reporting was more methodical but the impression remained that except in unusual circumstances the process was not *prioritised* either by management or by the tour leaders for whom even a comparatively laissez-faire system of reportage was a *chore*. The participant observation research rather confirmed this viewpoint.

5.8.3 Consumer letters

Consumer letters were also used in the identification of satisfaction. There was no attempt to deny that such letters might be letters of complaint - categorised as either 'reasonable' or 'beyond reason' by one interviewee - although the interviewees often

pointed out that letters of praise were also received. The jaundiced views of some interviewees - apparently inured to an increasingly *consumerist* and *litigious* clientele - were in marked contrast to the view of one other interviewee who followed up his astringent criticism of the backward nature of CSQs with another distinct approach to consumer letters. He had apparently studied all the consumer letters that were sent to his employer tour operator over a period of one month and had found only four (out of several hundred) that were non genuine (about 1:20 consumers wrote to the tour operator). The conclusion was that:

'... tour operators hide behind a screen when it comes to the (small) notice they take of letters...'

5.8.4 Other approaches

The same operator above had acknowledged the context of 'long-haul' travel - specifically that consumers were in different time zones from the tour operator HQ - and had set-up a 24 hour duty line for complaints. This approach certainly seemed different from that detailed by another interviewee in which faxes from consumers on the road were sometimes studiously ignored:

'... if a group that are out on the road send a fax. about some matter or other it may be an idea for the tour operator to wait and see what happens...'

In general, it did seem that tour operators were *wary* of seeking too much feed-back from consumers. This wariness was displayed not only in the limited use that was made of information provided by their main chosen tool - the CSQ - and the deliberately limited opportunity that was offered for free thought as witness the often confined space that was assigned to open comment in the CSQs; the often languid insistence on regular tour leader reports; and the defensive approach to customer letters.

Management *repression* of other methods such as designated de-brief sessions instigated by a tour leader - as if they did not happen in any case *without* the presence of the tour leader - merely confirmed the trend.

There was no suggestion from management that *participant observation* was either *installed* or *considered* as a potential technique. The researcher considered that this related to a mind-set that focussed through *inertia* on CSQs. The practical and academic rationale for the employment of such a technique became *overwhelming* as the primary interviews with management reached their conclusion and as the researcher engaged in further secondary reading which revealed the potential power of the technique.

Chapter 1 Introduction	Chapter 2 CS/D - Antecedents and antecedent temporal process	Chapter 3 Context	Chapter 4 Methodology	Chapter 5 Management interviews	<div>Chapter 6 Participant observation</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Overview◆ First concern◆ Penang◆ Penang to Kuala Lumpur◆ Kuala Lumpur◆ KL to Tembeling◆ Taman Negara◆ Downstream and Jerantut◆ Kota Bahru◆ East Coast Transit◆ Mersing - Tioman Ferry◆ On Tioman - at the start◆ On Tioman - beyond the start◆ Singapore</div>	Chapter 7 Interpretation	Chapter 8 Final overview
----------------------------------	---	-----------------------------	---------------------------------	--	--	------------------------------------	---------------------------------------

Chapter 6: Participant observation - description and analysis

6.0 Overview

The rationale for the inclusion of this narrative within the body of the thesis has been argued elsewhere (see 1.3). Essentially, the participant observation rests at the *methodological core* of this research. Furthermore the narrative generated from the participant observation also constitutes a central set of *primary research findings* which are most coherently *described and analysed in situ* and not devoid of the rich understanding that is generated from context. Moreover, the *chronological sequence* of the narrative is predicated by the research question that seeks to analyse the development of *CS/D through time*.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggested that illustrative materials are meant to give a sense of *reality*. The sort of analysis that is presented in this chapter parallel to the narrative provides an additional but more detached conceptualisation of reality - a *theoretical commentary* with varying degrees of abstraction. Such is the principle that underlies the description and analysis in this chapter.

For the purpose of anonymity the specific names of the participants have been altered. The company name of the tour operator has also been altered to 'Expeditions' and the specific tour name to 'Expeditions Malaysia' (EM). No tour operator appears under the company name 'Expeditions' within the last edition of the Travel Trade Gazette Directory. The ground operator name has been changed to 'Asian Overland'.

The researcher is referred to by the initials 'db'.

A detailed tour operator itinerary for the EM tour is found in Appendix 4.

The map (fig 6.1) highlights the place names mentioned in the text.

6.1 First concern - the people search @ Heathrow and KL

First sight - personal experience and new trepidation on group composition.

Later sight - relief and acceptance.

Listening in - EM choice and lifestyle choice.

Further listening - wide and deep experience and brand comparisons of EM tourists.

First sight - personal experience and new trepidation on group composition

Personal experience and observation without specific, targeted interaction (Gould (1995)) seemed to be more relevant as a systematic means of collecting data during the first bus and coach journeys and during the time spent at Heathrow and on the flight to Malaysia - rather than the full range of methods used within participant observation (see 4.5). After all, although nine of the ten participants were on the same Malaysian Airlines flight out of Heathrow there was no pre-arranged occasion during which the EM participants had an opportunity to meet up until arrival at Kuala Lumpur airport and subsequent transfer to a transit lounge prior to an internal flight to Penang.

The focus of experiential evidence at Heathrow was on the tension produced by the search for fellow group members. There was some sense of *deja vu* at the check-in desk. In 1979, prior to a similar group tour around the USA, db had managed to catch a glimpse of the names on the tour-group list during a visit to the tour operator office in London. At that time the key point of interest had been the male/female split and nationality split. On this occasion, other variables were of interest - as much for the purpose of the research as well as for the perceived importance of such variables on the personal tourism experience. db wrote:

'This (*deja vu*) was brought on by one particular lone traveller, probably in his 60s, although the age was not nearly so foreboding as the general demeanour. He was clearly very nervous about travel, where to go after check-in and so on. This sort of guy would hold up any group.... Snippets of conversation suggested that he was travelling onward, somewhere at least, after Kuala Lumpur. As far as I could gather it was not onward to Penang (the meeting point for EM tour members). I hoped so. Clearly, I have in my mind that the composition of the group will be composed of reasonably *confident* tourists (not a characteristic thought about before) aged 30-50, or 50 plus or even 50 plus

plus but basically *articulate*. At least that guy did not have an 'Expeditions' tour operator tag on his hand luggage'.

In fact, db did recognise from hand luggage tags one group of 'Expeditions' tourists in the boarding lounge - although the exact composition of the group was mistaken. Instead of a father with two mature daughters the group was actually composed of a husband and wife (later identified as 'Frank' and 'Kate'). At first sight these people did not seem to fit in with the articulate ideal outlined above. db recorded:

'I have seen a group of 3, a family group, a father and two mature daughters, I would say, as they waited in the airport lounge. Again (similar to the person at the check-in) they were apprehensive, father cross-armed, no smile, and there was no seeming fun in the group apart from one smile from one daughter'.

However, as a methodological note db also juxtaposed this description and comment with the point that there was a need to reconcile and accept group composition (again from the point of view of a researcher and a tourist).

'... not all tourists are necessarily *so* articulate - even inarticulate people will have their story.

However, it would be useful if at least some fellow tourists would be articulate on the coming tour.

The question can be asked as to whether there was something else that could have been done beforehand in order to ensure a better group composition - perhaps that word 'leisurely' in the brochure ('a fascinating and leisurely tour of Singapore and Southern Malaysia') attracts the type that does not particularly fit the 'ideal' category above. But surely the mix of activities (jungle and so on) will screen out some of the 'non ideal'.'

Vacillating doubts nevertheless remained so that despite the extensive pre-reading and rationalisation with regard to the applicability of participant observation for this study the earliest field-notes suddenly questioned, and questioned to the core, the choice of methodology. Only experience would provide the answers to the questions raised: 'Perhaps the general consumer, and specifically, here, tourists, are neither articulate on paper (as in questionnaires) *or* in a verbal sense. What about this as a finding? How brave would you have to be to accept this?'

Second sight - more trepidation and then relief and acceptance

So much for the indulgence - the early forced reliance on specific, personal experiences and thoughts rather than systematic participant observation focussed on EM tour members. In the Penang transit lounge there were no more than about 50 passengers and for db there was a heightened sense that it was possible to find fellow tour

members at this point. The tension and vacillation felt by db with regard to fellow tourists was mirrored by the other group members (although obviously not related to research methodology). db listened to the conversation of Frank and Kate. Frank had somehow identified one other 'Expeditions' tourist called 'Marje' and was busy attempting to alter the time of her transit ticket so that she could join an earlier transit flight to Penang. He periodically reported back to Kate what was going on both with regard to the ticket situation and also his search for other fellow tourists. At one stage he stated that 'there are four (other tourists) over there' and he had indeed identified what at the time looked like two couples ('Sinnead' and 'Jon' / 'Jane' and 'Donald'). In listening to the conversation of the couples db noted the obvious circling and positioning that was going on - one comment had the same sentiment as Frank's comment - 'there are three (other tourists) over there'. Frank, however, made Sinnead, Jon, Jane and Donald aware of the possibility of the earlier flight which, indeed, they all boarded. This activity by Frank was probably as animated and active as he was to become throughout the whole period in Malaysia and the full significance of a side comment to his wife 'now we will have someone to talk to' emerged later during the tour.

The observed importance of this initial search for fellow group members, within the confines of reserved behaviour, but nevertheless an active search, was later directly and indirectly confirmed through casual conversation and questioning. Donald, for example, who was actually travelling alone and not part of a couple, mentioned that he deliberately set out to identify people with the 'Expeditions' luggage tags. He said that he had found Jane, Jon and Sinnead in such a way at the transit lounge and recalled first impressions of group members on a previous tour to Sri Lanka:

'Although there were only five people in the group it was absolutely fine - even though I had spotted one older couple at Heathrow whom I immediately decided would not help to form a good group. I was wrong with reference to the woman in the couple at least - I am still in contact with her.'

db's first impressions, for this EM tour, were already formed at this point:

'Intuitively, I would say that with that group of 7 people things will be ok - they appear to form a good X-section and an articulate X-section.'

Listening in - EM choice and lifestyle choice:

**Further listening - wide and deep experience and brand comparisons
of EM members**

Throughout the period in the transit lounge db did not introduce himself to any of the seven clear EM members. This period acted as a useful bridge between the experiential collection of data from Oxford through to Penang and the start of fully developed participant observation. One other EM member, Susi, also remained anonymous - even to db. Later she showed that she, too, was interested in locating fellow members - even if outwardly she remained aloof:

'Of course I glanced around to find other likely group members. I thought that you (db) might be on the EM tour but then I reckoned you were on weekend leave from Singapore or somewhere.'

So, it was possible to listen in (but without the need for response) to other immediate conversation between Marje and Frank and Kate. This centred on how Marje had booked for a safari in South Africa but had then put her house on the market and withdrawn from the tour. Subsequently, she had passed the age limit for such a trip (placed at 65) and so had chosen EM as an alternative. Such points initiated a rationale for the EM tour choice on the part of Marje and also placed the choice in context. Frank and Kate included an even wider perspective on tourism choice - Frank now worked part-time and at the end of the year would retire from work. Kate suggested that there was plenty to do that was more interesting than work and listed a range of non-work activities such as bridge, bowls and rambling. Later it emerged that Kate also attended a regular keep-fit session at the same time as Frank closely studied holiday brochures. This was Frank's hobby and such attention to detail was something that Kate was not able to offer. Details flowed. Frank related that they had been with the 'Ramblers' organisation to Syria and Jordan and advised Marje to get the 'Ramblers' brochure - the 'Ramblers' were very competitive. Later it emerged that the 'Ramblers' also did a walking trip to Malaysia but that in 1996/97 the times were not suitable for Frank and Kate.

60

Clearly, the identification of fellow tour members occasioned an almost immediate review, in the case of Frank and Kate and Marje, of the choice decision for the EM tour, other tourism choice and experience through time and the wider consideration of tourism choice within perceived life style. Throughout all the tour but particularly over the next 36 hours in Penang these themes were revisited in both whole group and sub-group conversation by each of the other tour members. The alacrity with which such conversations sprang-up allied with their depth of detail and thought suggested that the

tour group members attached importance to what they said. These conversations were not just empty chatterings although this is not to discount the value of idle chatter and the need to judge the importance of both overheard and guided conversations.

So early on it became apparent that consumers did indeed engage in a range of brand comparisons based on experience. These comparisons were with long-haul tourism and included other units of the same brand, other similar brands and also product types within the long-haul product class. The extent of these comparisons surprised db. Experience was far more extensive than had been suggested during the management interviews. Management had suggested and offered figures to show that repeat bookings were relatively high. They were also able to quote examples of particular tourists who had used their operation on upward of, say, ten occasions. But management had never mentioned the likelihood of considerable cross-brand use and switching.

A further surprise during the whole two weeks spent with the tour group was the extremely limited number of occasions during which fellow tourists mentioned any short-haul tourism or indeed any other tourism - apart from visiting friends and relatives. It appeared that the move to long haul tourism on the tourism career path effectively halted the possibility or even the thought of short-haul tourism. The concept of a tourism career seemed capable of application to these consumers. The details of these careers emerged from specific and general comparison and description of tourism experiences not just in KL Airport but also on many occasions in Penang and in later destinations throughout the tour - all evidence of the extent of conversation that revolved around such comparison.

Even within the comparatively short time period spent in the transit lounge at KL the initial people search had been largely although not wholly concluded, the initial trepidations had been met with relief or acceptance or otherwise and the early, tentative but revealing conversations on EM choice, tourism experience and comparisons had been opened up. The tour was now beginning to be set.

6.2 Penang

Getting together - some confusion and perhaps some mismanagement.

Georgetown, Penang - first contact with place, more contact with EM people and Asif.

Georgetown, Penang - first activity, first contact with place, more contact with Asif and EM people and thoughts on earlier confusion.

Alone again - Asif opts for meet and greet.

Island tour - around the island but not inside the island.

Kek Lok Si temple - some frustration from a look and see experience.

Reflections on a day alone.

Penang Hill - more to do with people, EM people, and a bonding of sorts.

Further early conversations - confirmation of the role of people at the core of tourist experience.

Getting together - some confusion and perhaps some mismanagement

Asif the tour group leader was one step behind the first eight tour members to arrive at Penang Airport from Kuala Lumpur Airport. He arrived on a 10:20 flight out of KL, whereas all except db who arrived on the 10:50 flight and Robbi who arrived from Thailand by rail on Day 2, had arrived on a 9:50 flight. The outline of the first meeting between Asif and the 9:50 arrivals was provided over a meal in a restaurant at the end of Day 1 whilst the detail was provided by Jon and other members of the group in conversation later on during the tour. According to Jon the group was not particularly concerned about the late appearance but Asif did not seem to be aware of the comparatively short period of time that they had waited. Asif continued to think that they had waited for more than the actual 15 minutes. Jon and other members of the group were rather more concerned that Asif did not seem to know exactly how many people he was supposed to be meeting. Furthermore, Asif asked the group if they had an itinerary, a dossier on double-sided A4 paper supplied by 'Expeditions'. Asif did not have one of these and his main concern was that the EM tour was the first tour to follow a new itinerary. This extended the tour to the North-East of Malaysia as far as Kota Bahru and also involved travel down the East coast as far as Mersing. The tour further involved transport connections with which Asif was not entirely familiar such as the overnight train from Jerantut to Kota Bahru. The relevancy of these concerns

became clearer as the tour progressed. Jon and others later recalled that the first impression of Asif was not entirely favourable.

On arrival from the 10:50 flight db was surprised to notice that the 'Expeditions' tourists that he had identified in the KL transit lounge were nowhere to be seen. Nor was there any message. In common with Jon, db had assumed that the tour leader would have a definitive list of tour members together with flight times and that he would wait with the group until the 10:50 flight. The 10:50 flight time was printed on the db flight ticket. The Airport Information Centre informed db that there was a local town bus that ran on the hour to downtown Penang (called Georgetown). Taxis also ran but these were more expensive and db thought that the delay until the arrival of the town bus might allow the tour leader to return from Georgetown in order to pick up late comers. In fact, of course, Asif was uncertain as regards numbers, and also did not have his own transport. Therefore, the wait was in vain and db travelled on the town bus which actually stopped only a short distance from the hotel that had been pre-booked for the tour group. Asif was not in the hotel. The rest of the group had been allocated rooms and so db waited some 20 minutes or so until the group was due to assemble prior to an afternoon walk through Georgetown. Asif was surprised, even partly confused, by the arrival of an extra person from Penang Airport and the reason for this became clearer as the afternoon progressed. db insisted that there was no problem. This was not a false insistence although it was motivated by the research need for a degree of personal conformity at such an early stage. db had quickly sensed that Penang was not a dangerous place. There was none of the customary hassle associated with taxi drivers at the airport - a system for allocating taxi rides was very clearly in place - and the passengers, mainly schoolchildren, who boarded the bus were in no way threatening. Two passengers were helpful enough to point the way to the hotel and as is often the case travel by local bus proved to be a good way to observe the local situation. This last point was also appreciated by Robbi who later described his arrival seven hours late in Bangkok and his consequent need to get involved immediately in the life of the city 'which at the time was a great adventure'.

On the other hand, a rather more serious set of problems could have arisen if db had not brought the travel document that gave the name of the hotel in Georgetown or if db was less used to unfamiliar locations.

Georgetown, Penang - first activity, first contact with place, more contact with Asif and EM people and thoughts on earlier confusion

During the afternoon walk the other members of the tour group did not suggest that Asif was in any way to blame for leaving one passenger behind at Penang Airport. They already knew from their own experience at the airport that Asif was uncertain about the composition of the group. During the walk, too, Asif periodically sent the group on ahead whilst he contacted the head office of the ground operator 'Asian Overland' in KL in order to arrange extra accommodation, an extra seat on the Penang-KL train and an extra sleeper berth on the train to Kota Bahru. With time the observation on the reticence to offer criticism helped to form a clear general conclusion on the formation of blame. Individual members were more gently inquisitive about the flight details of db - Sinnead as well as Susi had noticed db in the transit area at KL. Perhaps this inquisitiveness could be expected - it provided an easy source of conversation.

Later in the day some tour group members did comment that they would not have liked to be placed in a similar situation to db. Donald even drew a parallel with an experience in Sri Lanka immediately after the Tamil bombings in Colombo. Access to the airport was closed to the tour leader. The tour leader intended to meet the tour group who had already met one another 'in a field somewhere about two miles from the airport'. However, this message was not conveyed to the group. It was suggested by the EM tour group that this sort of situation could work itself out when a sizeable group of 5 was involved (as in the Sri Lanka case) but would be different in the case of an individual tourist or a smaller group.

As the walk progressed db probably asked Asif more questions concerning the mechanics of the tour operation than a normal tourist might ask at such a stage - although it later became apparent that both Jon and Donald were aware of the theme of the conversation and expressed interest in what Asif had said. However, there did seem to be a context for such questions since Asif made no secret of his continuing doubt over the tour numbers and the tour itinerary. db field-notes recorded for the first time Asif's stated view of his job - to get people from A to B - a view which was expressed recurrently throughout the tour. Again the significance of the change in itinerary on such a view only became truly apparent as the tour progressed.

As far as he was aware one of the directors of 'Expeditions' had last been out to Malaysia in about 1994 (Asif proved later to be very precise with regard to dates) 'and

did everything that you do on your 12 day tour in about 4 days'. Therefore, the new change in itinerary was planned about 2-3 years previously. Apart from the visit by the director, Asif considered that the management of 'Asian Overland' would meet up with 'Expeditions' management in tourism trade exhibitions. But the change of itinerary was set by 'Expeditions'. Furthermore, Asif himself had no input to the planned itinerary. He could hardly conceal his amazement when db asked if he had been to England and to the 'Expeditions' offices. He did not give feedback in the form of a report to 'Asian Overland' his immediate employer, yet alone 'Expeditions' although much later on Tioman Island he made it clear that he did get to hear about negative (but not positive) feedback. In other words, he received feedback even if he did not give feedback.

The walking tour that Asif devised within Georgetown focussed around the Chinese quarter and colonial quarter. These were presumably perceived as highlights suitable for the EM tour and Asif provided interpretation - particularly when asked. He initiated and engaged in conversation on behalf of the group with street food hawkers and wandered with the group through an interesting area of stilt houses that was merely dismissed the next day as a 'slum area' by a local guide. db field-notes recorded that Georgetown was just another abandoned colonial town, architecturally similar to many others, with wooden shutters, peeling paint, partially open drains and so on. In short, this was not a spectacular activity to start the tour although it had its interest. It functioned, albeit unintentionally, as a means by which the members of the EM group were introduced both to one another and to the understated style of Asif.

EM group alone - a meal tradition established but Asif opts to eat alone

At the end of the day there was still no direct adverse criticism of Asif. The group members were indeed reticent to make judgements. In retrospect, of course, there were enough happenings that could have been assembled to make a notably negative impression. Specifically, apart from the arrival problems Asif also disassociated himself from the group in the evening. It is worth detailing exactly how and why this came about. Meals were not provided within the tour package - with the exception of breakfast - and so the group tended to eat together in the evening. During the walk Asif had recommended one restaurant but at the meal time this turned out to be closed. The group certainly needed some guidance at this stage of the tour and Georgetown did not have restaurants that newcomers could immediately identify as of good standard - the basic requirement was whether food was prepared and served in a clean environment. Asif chose another restaurant for the group but then pointed out that he

could not eat in this restaurant for religious reasons - he was a Muslim and it served pork. The group members immediately accepted this explanation although later it was queried as to why Asif had not taken the group to a non pork restaurant in the first place - the original restaurant also served pork. Sinnead raised the question of where Asif was going to eat and this started a discussion on the role of a tour leader. Donald drew on experience:

' "Expeditions" do not run the show when they do not have their own tour leader on the ground - in Israel they did, in Sri Lanka they did not and here they are also making use of a local guide - the local guides have a different relationship with the group. They are not so closely bound together.'

There was no further comment on this point or even any further anecdotes. Clearly the group members had adopted a wait and see position. The feeling was quizzical rather than antagonistic. The meal was carried along with descriptions of previous travel experience - the group was not too large to allow interaction around one table and from the first night meals proved to be a notable part of the tour activity. On the way back to the hotel from the restaurant db struggled to retain all that had been discussed - the meal was like a two hour focus group and a night of note-making lay ahead.

Alone again - Asif opts for meet and greet

Island tour - around the island but not inside the island

Kek Lok Si temple - some frustration from a look and see experience

Reflections on a day alone

Day 2 was also largely passed without the presence of Asif. It appeared, although there was some doubt, that an additional member of the group was due to arrive by train from another 'Expeditions' tour in Thailand. Asif arranged for the group to go on a three hour morning minibus tour of Penang Island. He intended to meet the new arrival, suggested that the whole group would meet up in the early afternoon and half-suggested that the group went to see the Kek Lok Si buddhist temple and then took the funicular railway to the top of Penang Hill. He did forewarn the group that the train from Thailand might be late and that if he was not in the hotel lobby at a certain time the group should organise its own afternoon activities. This is exactly what happened. Indeed, db sensed that such would be the case.

The minibus tour of the island was a standard of its type. It passed out of Georgetown along a highway that the driver guide described as the Silicon Valley of Malaysia, an area of multi-national electronics companies. The first stop was a more traditional tourist halt or haunt - Penang's Snake Temple, admittedly interesting in itself and, perhaps ingenuously billed as the 'oldest in the world'; and further stops were made to

look at traditional rural dwellings; a roadside display of indigenous plants; a batik factory, with a hurried factory visit that funnelled visitors into an adjoining batik shop; and a delapidated fishing village, complete with local men mending their nets, which was on the edge of and starkly contrasted against the fast expanding international apartment and hotel area of Penang Island.

db certainly felt frustrated by the passive nature of the minibus tour. Donald made a strident, open one-to-one criticism to db:

'I have gone around the island but do not feel that I know it any better'.

This was not helped by a faulty microphone contact on the minibus which EM members eventually, although with some reserve, asked to be turned off.

Over lunch, with Sinnead, Donald and Jane, db repeated Donald's comment to Sinnead but it became obvious that she had decided not to enter into such essentially negative views. She was reluctant to offer negative criticism and was to maintain this approach almost throughout the tour - an approach which proved to have its use for the research process. Brenda's view was that the mini-bus tour was good because it took the group out of town. db fieldnotes interpreted this comment, given Brenda's approach, as a backhand criticism of Georgetown itself - a criticism, albeit mild, that was soon extended by a number of tour group members. In the evening of Day 2 Donald said that he found Penang claustrophobic; Jon mused that he would be bored with any extension beyond the time allotted in Penang; and Susi said that she was looking forward to the more rural and 'wild' areas on the east coast where she had lived as a child and had formed specific childhood memories.

In truth, there was no particular difficulty in deciding that the afternoon activity could go ahead exactly as envisaged, but without Asif, although db took a positive although democratic lead in this decision and in other decisions through the afternoon whenever there was some dithering. This was partly borne out of a personal desire to do something active after the torpid morning tour and partly in deference to the stated methodological aim that db should not take an inactive part in the group. On this occasion, it seemed that even if the balancing act between passive and active participation was tipped towards the active there would be many benefits gained in this instance from a more lead role in the absence of the tour leader. This was an instant spot decision but it may be judged below that the research results justified the action.

The afternoon / evening activity at the Kek Lok Si temple and on Penang Hill extended over six hours and was followed by a meal in the first restaurant recommended by Asif

on the previous evening (the 'Hong Kong') and which had already been tried by db, Sinnead, Donald and Jane during the lunch time. Accordingly, the tour group was not in contact with Asif until much later in the night. He was waiting in the lobby on the return of the group from the restaurant. The new group member, Robbi, had apparently arrived late and was catching up on sleep after what turned out to be a 25 hour rail journey from Bangkok. Asif was particularly concerned that the tour group members were prepared for the early start that was required the next day. A bus had been arranged to take the tour group members to the rail station on the mainland. Asif required the early start because of the vagaries of the rush-hour traffic in the early morning.

db wrote:

'From db standpoint, not expressed, I would say that A. was not correct to effectively abandon a group for a day in order to pick up one fellow tourist. Surely some other system is possible - what about leaving a message at the Airport Information Centre together with 20 rm? (db was unaware that the new tour member was arriving by train - but the same sentiment applies). Or any other solution - probably there are clear alternatives for a local tour leader on familiar ground. However, such thoughts are not expressed by others...'

Of course, there is a clear defence for the particular action of Asif insomuch as a new, lone arrival is potentially more vulnerable than a group who had already orientated themselves in Penang. The EM group had effectively but indirectly expressed such a view over the evening meal on Day 1.

However, on a number of occasions during the day it would have been useful to have had Asif present. This was the early stage of the tour and without pre-judgement it was maybe also the early stage of evaluation of the tour. db could certainly see the argument that a tour leader should be present at such a period. It was perceived by a number of group members at the time that an input from Asif might have improved the minibus tour. Later in the day and without exception all the group struggled for an interpretation of the Kek Lok Si temple. The temple was physically split into a number of different levels and the significance of these levels was unclear. Background information on the construction of the temple was missing as, too, were practically all aspects of its architecture and even information on buddhism in general. Even Sinnead made a clipped comment that there was a need for interpretation. There was no visitor interpretation of any sort provided by the temple but Asif could have provided this interpretation. However, he was not present and yet seemed largely to escape real

direct censure because of his stated need to meet up with the new arrival. This was accepted by the tour members and continued to be accepted so even towards the end of the tour when db sounded out a more critical viewpoint to some members of the tour group.

Penang Hill - more to do with people, EM people, and a bonding of sorts

From the Kek Lok Si temple the group moved as planned to the nearby Penang Hill. A funicular railway, a dramatic piece of British engineering from the 1930s, ran up and then down a heavily wooded and extremely steep slope and was unexpectedly long with regard to both length and journey time. This rather special means of travel and the close confines of the cabins seemed to encourage conversation and laughter.

Unusually, as it later turned out, the conversation was not only within the group but also between group members, some other tourists and local people.

The funicular trip was later seen by several tour members, db included, as an important bonding activity. Jane suddenly emerged as an excellent story teller, a point that was made later by Sinnead in the first piece of intra-group gossip, and sparked off a detailed, entertaining comparison with Jon of white-water rafting adventures.

Coincidentally, Jon commented on the bonding process that occurred on a tour that involved white-water rafting on the Zambesi River near the Victoria Falls. Jon had rafted the same stretch of river on the Zambesi as Jane and he also cross compared experiences with Marje.

So, in the most unplanned and unlikely of events the EM group, or at least a part of the EM group (Frank and Kate had returned to Georgetown direct from the Kek Lok Si temple and Robbi had not yet joined from Thailand) began through shared conversation and experience to bond together into a distinctive group.

Further early conversations - confirmation of the role of people at the core of tourist experience

The first concern with people, initially fellow tour group members, was confirmed as a special element of the tourism experience not only during the initial people search, but during early conversations in Penang and then, subsequently, throughout the tour.

With the use of comparisons from group tours to Sri Lanka and Israel, Egypt and Jordan, Donald volunteered his own consideration on this matter over the meal on the first evening in Penang. Succinctly, he said that:

'You can forget about the tour operator; it is the people that are important. One tour is completely different from another because each group is so different. '

Of course, there is room for argument here. Caution would have to be applied in order to extend the view of Donald so that a tour operator and even a destination were an irrelevance in comparison to the composition of a tour group. Certainly the basis of the comments by Donald were given credence by his ongoing and articulated observations on group dynamics, including leadership and relationships, and the importance that he attached to such observations - although his own predetermined role was neither notably passive nor active.

Sinnead also emphasised the importance of people. She said that Jon had been on an 'Exodus' tour and that she had liked the friends that he had met on that tour. They were people of like mind and so it had not been a particularly lengthy decision to sign up on the EM tour. She reckoned, and this was at the start of the tour, that there was a chance for her and Jon to be together and to do their own thing within the framework of the tour and the other people.

During the first evening in Penang Frank also stressed the role of people. He told the whole group of one special tourism experience to Albania with 'Jules Verne'. At the time the Albanian secret police required that British subjects only entered the country with false (French) identity cards - a rule that related back to a dispute from 1945. Also they were liable to confiscate all kinds of 'subversive' literature. However, this was not the special experience. Frank continued with dramatic effect that 'Albania is the only country that I have left with tears in my eyes.' This was because of the extraordinary shows put on by a *fellow tourist* who turned out to be a Ukrainian belly dancer and who started a dance show in every town that the group went to over an eight day period - shows that were equally as successful with the tourists as with the locals. The members of the EM tour looked around without success to see if there were any potential belly dancers among their group. To no avail. At the time it remained to be seen whether the tour group had any such special people although the essential compatibility of the people-mix was increasingly established.

Marje, too, commented during the Penang Island circuit that one of her reasons for coming on tours such as those of 'Expeditions' was 'because of the sense of adventure and, therefore, the people that you meet'. Compatible people. To this end she had

previously travelled with 'Expeditions' to the Greek Islands on a sailing cruise and had also sailed on the 'Soren Larsen' tallship operated by 'Expeditions' in New Zealand. She always said to herself that each such tour would be her last but, so far at any rate, had always booked up for more.

It became apparent that it was the people that drew her back on tour and the high intensity relationships that developed in small groups even though much later on, she succinctly expressed the transient nature of the relationships:

'Isn't it strange that here we are getting to know people for two weeks and then you will never get to see them again in your life.'

At this stage of the tour neither Susi nor Jane had made comparable comments on the role of people although Susi was later to make comments, based on negative tourism experience in a hotel complex in Tunisia, that strongly supported the core role of fellow tourists as people partners in the tourism experience.

Robbi, too, in his forceful, inimitable way was also bound, almost as soon as he joined the tour proper on Day 3, to vibrantly stress the role of people - although with the added twist that for him the people element extended beyond the tour group to include the local people. Robbi *himself* inevitably made a difference from Day 3 onward to the people experience - the group composition was altered. This difference was extended, additionally and crucially, to group self-perception of the EM tour.

The eve of Day 3 promised much. The arrival of a new tour member, the first opportunity to travel extensively within Malaysia (and on public transport), and a day in Kuala Lumpur.

6.3 Penang to Kuala Lumpur

Asif and transport tension - a theme is set.

Robbi - stories from a completed tour.

Preparation for change - instead of Kuala Lipis read Jerantut.

Asif - thoughts as a tour leader and practice, too.

Asif and transport tension - a theme is set.

The early start on Day 3 was faultlessly observed by all the established group members and bags were loaded on to the bus and breakfast taken within the time-scale set by Asif. Asif had told the rest of the group during the previous evening that Robbi also knew about this arrangement. Robbi did not appear on time, however, and he clearly suggested later that Asif had not stressed the urgent need for an early start. Asif was not amused by the delay and looked extremely tense. This was only alleviated when the expected traffic congestion did not materialise. The tension, bordering on obsession, of Asif with transport connections was rationalised later in the day and in subsequent conversations.

With the reduction in tension Asif assumed more the mode of a classic courier representative rather than the interpretation of the role of tour leader that he had so far adopted. He outlined the activities during the day ahead. He intended to organise a bus tour around Kuala Lumpur. This suggestion was not met with immediate enthusiasm (it would follow on from a five hour train journey to Kuala Lumpur) and he left individual group members to decide and inform him as to whether they wanted to join the tour.

Robbi - stories from a completed tour

Robbi clearly looked like a person who had been on the road for some time. In fact, he had been on the 'Expeditions' Hilltribe Trek in North Thailand with a start and finish in Bangkok and had joined up onto the EM tour after a rail journey south from Bangkok to Penang. db certainly thought at this stage, as the EM tour sat back in a comparatively luxurious coach for a short journey that could have been done more efficiently using public transport, that Robbi must really think that this is a particularly tame group of tourists and a particularly tame tour. Of course, others had speculated about Robbi before he arrived and Sinnead had shown some concern about the

difficulty that he might face integrating within the EM group - tacit recognition that the EM group had formed an identity within a short time.

Sinnead was the first to engage in conversation with Robbi and as this happened to be in the seat behind db it was not necessary to strain too hard in order to get an overview of a completed tour. Sinnead even asked the sort of questions that db might have asked:

'So, how was the tour?'

'It was just brilliant...'

'What made it for you? Was it the people or what?'

'Well, yes, it was the people but it was everything really...'

The fellow tourists were all just fine - including people such as a tantrum prone American lady whom he initially thought was just awful (shades of the earlier anecdote from Donald). In addition, 'Quintin' the tour leader (called a 'guide' by Robbi), was excellent - he was 'quite old' (52), very experienced and knew exactly what he was doing, particularly as he had his 'dream team' (local helpers) working with him.

Furthermore, the hill-tribe peoples were also just fine - and in this observation Robbi set his experience in Thailand apart from the experience of any of the EM tourists both up until Day 3 and beyond. For Robbi, the importance of people extended beyond fellow tourists and the tour specific leader/guide and extended to the local people. Even on the EM tour, with far less opportunity for interaction with the local people, Robbi went out of his way to interact beyond the confines of the group. Accordingly, on the Thailand tour Robbi danced with the local tribespeople after the other fellow tourists had returned to sleep in the tribal huts; smoked opium that was made from local poppies with the tribespeople; and even had what seemed like a serious proposal of marriage through one of the tribe elders. Also the Thai people in general were so easy going that even in Bangkok he felt safe, really safe. However, it was not just the people - locals, tour guide and fellow tourists - that made the experience 'the best holiday of my life'. It was also the variety of modes of transport - hanging out of a non air-conditioned train; on top of a truck; riding an elephant and on a bamboo raft as a part of the trek and so on. The accommodation, too, was fine and the ample communal food, cooked in a giant wok was also a success. All in all, therefore, it became quickly apparent why on the previous day Robbi had considered foregoing the EM tour:

'On the border cross-over and the train journey down through Malaysia I immediately sensed that there was a difference between the Malaysians and the Thais and wanted to return to Thailand. But now I just want to make this work...'

With further questions from Sinnead, Robbi set his account against both experience and expectations. He had not travelled much before - or at least not for the last seven

years - largely because of work commitments. He knew that he was going on the two 'Expeditions' tours in January (two months before departure) he acted as a replacement for a friend who had just received a green card to work in the USA. He had not even read the brochures and lots of people had tried to put him off during the pre-travel period with reports of the health risks - notably malaria.

Robbi's outline was a neat summary of a completed tour. It sated Sinnead's initial curiosity. Perhaps Robbi had told the same story to Asif on Day 2 and he had certainly made telephone contact with a friend in England during the previous evening but the story was still fresh and described with detail, realism and enthusiasm - which generated unintentional envy, perhaps the most telling comment on the initial stages of the EM tour, among many of the EM tourists. Sinnead switched places on the coach, deliberately or not, with Donald and Robbi gave a similar although condensed version of his experiences. Soon everyone seemed to know the story, the story of a finished adventure, which juxtaposed uneasily with the EM tour up until that time.

Immediately this story was useful as confirmation of the role of *people* in the tourism experience - a role already writ large on the EM tour. This was not just because the role of people was the first aspect that Sinnead chose to question but also because of the relish with which Robbi chose to give his answers. With regard to *expectations* it seemed initially that Robbi was not in line with the other tour members although a deeper, later consideration cast some doubt on this thought. On *experience*, however, there was a difference from the majority of the group. Robbi was on the foot of the tourism career ladder, although the hill-tribe trek was as daring as many had ventured - and Robbi's experience was more in line with db's pre-trip expectation for the group as a whole.

Robbi was later to return to some of the themes described above during a high spirited conversation with db on the rough crossing to Tioman Island.

Preparation for change - instead of Kuala Lipis read Jerantut

Meanwhile, on the coach bound for the Penang-KL train, Asif had moved on to give some information on the post Kuala Lumpur trip into the tropical rainforest over Day 4,5,6. In a very matter of fact, almost resigned way, he pointed out that the description of Jerantut and Kuala Lipis were mixed up in the dossier.

It was Asif's opinion that there was nothing to do in Jerantut and accordingly he suggested that we left the rainforest on a 2pm boat rather than on an 8am boat. This was accepted. It seemed logical and nobody voiced any contrary opinion. Furthermore, the (sleeper) train out of Jerantut was at 3pm in the morning - or so Asif was lead to believe (he was not entirely convinced that this was the case and indeed also ventured the opinion that sometimes the train did not stop). Certainly the impression given was that the Jerantut station was one platform set in a field in the middle of nowhere. The obsession with transport logistics continued.

This was the first time that Asif had looked ahead with the group beyond the immediate next activity. The situation did not lend itself to discussion since Asif was talking from the front of the coach. Jerantut was described in the dossier as a pleasant town in which a strong colonial influence could be seen in the buildings. The confusion between Jerantut and Kuala Lipis effectively meant that there would be no opportunity to see such colonial influence. Nor, since the train left at 3am would there be much chance to see from the train what the dossier described as the 'magnificent views of the rainforest and highlands'. All of these points were only considered in a vague sense to start with by group members although their full relevance became more obvious as the information was assimilated and as the tour progressed. For example, Frank became increasingly agitated by the 3am start both before and after the event. Perhaps this was one of the occasions when he was worried about things that others did not have the energy to worry about - a later observation of Donald. Kate appeared to believe even until the end of the tour that the new arrangements caused her to miss out on the 'Cameron Highlands'. She understood Kuala Lipis to be in the Cameron Highlands - a false understanding.

It was the opinion of db that Asif did not expect negative comment concerning the discrepancy between the real itinerary and the published itinerary. His *raison d'etre* for passing over the information was merely to alert the tour group to a changed reality - and particularly that another much more early start lay ahead.

In Asif's favour, too, the discovery of the dossier mix-up partly vindicated his request for a dossier from one tour group member at the start of each and every tour. With such alterations this seems like a logical defensive measure.

Asif - thoughts as a tour leader and practice, too

Later in the day db found the chance to question Asif on the background to his job. People in Malaysia wanted to be tour leaders but few stayed beyond two years. A friend of his was on the point of quitting after seven years - the length of time that Asif had been a leader - but specifically there were only three people left in 'Asian Overland' who were qualified to take tours of greater than seven people. He liked the job, considered it to be like any other job, and did not mind the travel. However, he did not like the city and preferred to be up in the country areas or on the beach at Tioman Island - and Asif certainly relaxed, whether by coincidence or not, as he moved away from the city.

His main concern as a tour leader was to ensure that people got from A to B. This was a strain. There was no mention here of aspects of consumer behaviour such as group cohesion - or satisfaction. It was felt by db, although not expressed, that perhaps a concern for logistics was the way that Asif could cope - effectively minimising emotional demands and concentrating on the practical. There were to be many more occasions on which this theme was to re-emerge.

This background was gathered during a break in the tour around KL. During the train journey Asif separated himself from the rest of the tour group members. The seats were in pairs and all faced in the same direction which meant that there was limited scope for interaction apart from with the immediate neighbour. However, Asif organised a seat for himself that was in a different part of the carriage. This was not commented on by the tour group members. However, it later emerged that he took himself off at one stage to a buffet car that was by no means obvious in its location - lying beyond what seemed like the end carriage. On this point, Donald certainly commented that Asif could have mentioned the existence of this carriage to the tour group - there was no other opportunity to eat until the late evening.

The train journey as an experience was very ordinary and not only because the seating confined group conversation. There was little animation except when the train nearly left one half of the group outside the train at what was supposed to be a protracted stop. The air-conditioning, the level of efficiency - there was a cleaning rota for the carriages and the toilets during the journey - and mostly docile passengers all led to the general feeling that the journey was too easy, too homogenised. The proposed bus tour around KL was not considered to be an inspiring treat for the journey's end after such

a soporific 4-5 hours on the railway, but it was what Asif had suggested and planned, and eventually all the tour group except Susi decided to take the option.

Whilst Robbi had emerged as a vibrant addition to the tour group - although he was also handled with care - the overland journey to KL had not matched up to expectation. KL was also about to disappoint.

6.4 Kuala Lumpur

Around KL - photo-stops and whistle-stop courier mode.

Asif - duty to the fore.

Rainforest expectations - views forward to Taman Negara.

db would almost certainly not have spent 2-3 hours on a bus in KL and its environs in a non research circumstance - a glance at a map suggested that it would have been quite feasible to walk around the city. However, Asif said that he would take the EM group to Chinatown and the Central Market in the evening - db was interested in both of these and would have spent time in each during the afternoon. The bus tour, therefore, seemed like a way of maintaining close touch with the group.

Asif moved in to courier mode on this tour. Each successive visit - to a mosque, the ex-colonial playing fields in front of the Selangor Club and the nearby buildings of the Supreme and High Courts, the Royal Selangor Pewter Factory, the National Monument, Istana Negara the official residence of the King, and the National Museum - was accompanied by what db field-notes recorded as 'some relevant and irrelevant patter' and essentially amounted to no more than a 'photo-stop' (a term used by Asif - no doubt with some contempt given some later comments). The National Monument, in particular, was full of tourists who were on a similar bus tour as the EM group. This last location was a 20 minute stop and was followed by a 5 minute stop at the Istana Negara - here, Robbi commented that 'I have not felt like a tourist until now - but now I do'. At various attractions on this bus tour the members of the EM tour took pictures of EM sub-groups or the whole EM group for the first time (although db had a 'research photo' on Penang Hill) and Donald made some later observations that the frequency of such posed moments were a reflection of group empathy. In this case the EM members had truly empathised as a group by this stage and moreover continued to empathise through the tour - Donald reckoned that in comparison with other tours there was a notable amount of intra-group photography. At the National Monument it was diverting to observe that other groups also had the urge for intra-group photography and indeed Frank made an equally diverting comment about the irony of Japanese groups lining up for photos against a monument, by the same sculptor and in the same genre as the Iwo Jima monument, which commemorated the expulsion of the Japanese armed forces out of Malaysia.

With regard to the KL bus tour, for db it seemed that Asif had mis-judged the expectations of the tour group members - or perhaps all except Kate and Frank. The tour was very different from the walking tour of Penang. On the other hand, Donald thought that he would not have been able to cover the so called points of interest as effectively by himself within the time constraints. Generally, too, there were no immediate criticisms except those expressed by Sinnéad via questioning of the factory guide about work conditions and a complaint from Kate that she could not hear what the factory guide was saying. *However*, KL was probably the least favoured destination of all the destinations on the whole EM tour. This must in part be related to the activities of the tour group - the bus tour took up the whole afternoon. On the other hand, other facets of KL as a destination called forth some critical comments - Robbi, streetwise and as in tune as anyone with the Far East said that he did not feel safe in KL and compared it unfavourably with Bangkok and Thailand in general (and also London), whilst Susi felt threatened by the males in the street - unlike in Penang.

Asif - duty to the fore versus 'I will do what I want to do'.

The tour group recognised that Asif intended to visit his home at the end of the day and so moved more or less straight from the bus tour to the evening visit to Chinatown and the Central Market - the caveat, 'more or less' is meant to cover a flippant comment by Jon, objectively untrue, that the group spent more time discussing what to do than actually doing what to do. Whatever, on arrival to Chinatown db and several others suggested that Asif should leave the group and go home. It was known that there were a number of restaurants in the Central Market and so the group did not truly need him to stay. However, he insisted that he would take the group on to the Central Market, too.

This was surprising and db was never able to glean from Asif just what his obligations were to the group. In retrospect, the particular insistence to guide the group down to the Central Market could seem to be at odds with Asif's disappearance on the evening of Day 1, almost total disappearance on Day 2 (a partial disappearance could be more justified by the need to collect Robbi), and disappearance or at least self-isolation on Day 3 during the rail journey. Each of these disappearances could be seen to say something about Asif's conception of his job - 'I will do what I want to do'. Each were thought by db, too, although without strong evidence at the time, to have an effect on both his view of job satisfaction and the EM tourist (consumer) view of satisfaction with Asif, specific events and overall events. Asif's job conception was picked up in

later discussions with Asif - in the boat on the way into the rainforest, over an evening meal in Kota Bahru, on the beach in Tioman Island and at various times in Singapore.

Only Marje mentioned any negative thought about Asif during the evening after Asif had left for his home although Robbi perhaps showed the benefit of recent experience and comparison by innocently mentioning that his guide in Thailand was doing tours back to back and doing tours well. Although it may seem rather small minded - it did so at the time (and Robbi did not concur with Marje) - she felt that Asif should take more care of tour group safety - specifically on *road crossings* (although tempted to finish this sentence with an exclamation mark such a temptation has been resisted - this was Marje's true concern). KL certainly had a considerable amount of traffic and was not pedestrian friendly but even if not too much was read in to Marje's face-value comment it was worth note insomuch as it came from the perspective of a person who had led tours around her local town in England (safety is a priority of such guides) and perhaps offered comment on her conception of the role of a tour leader. This was borne out on a number of later occasions and indeed it emerged that different people had different views regarding the role of tour leaders. For example, Donald in Kota Bahru deemed the tour leader to be a facilitator whilst Robbi had already described his view of the ideal tour leader - a sort of general factotum - embodied in the tour leader of his group in Thailand.

Rainforest expectations - views forward to Taman Negara.

The actual meal in the Central Market, rather as a reflection of the whole day, was rather standard and controlled as might be anticipated in an attraction on the tourist trail. However, one concern notable and relevant to the research did emerge during conversation and that was the high expectations that were held for the upcoming rainforest visit. Sinnead sort of confided over the meal that from what she had read during the day, presumably on the train journey from Penang, the 'jungle experience' could just be rather too over-commercialised. However, she hoped not. Jon showed his interest through a conversation about what exactly constituted a 'jungle' whilst Robbi also directly mentioned that the rainforest had been the major counter against the thought to return to Thailand and abandon the EM tour prior to his arrival in Penang. Earlier in the day db had directly asked Frank for the highlight of the tour and he had asked 'What, up until now or in the future?' - and although he did not answer to the first part of his own rephrased question he nevertheless was clear that for him the tropical rainforest was the highlight of the whole tour. Donald, too had also indirectly voiced the same sentiment:

'It will be so disappointing if the trip into the jungle is not successful.'

Almost for the first time, therefore, it became clear that the tour was compartmentalised by the EM tourists and that some compartments were invested with particular significance with regard to expectations - a word that was not directly mentioned throughout each of the conversations above but which was strongly and in no way circuitously implied.

There was a clear onus for the tour to be a success in the rainforest in Taman Negara.

6.5 KL to Tembeling and Tembeling to Kuala Tehan in Taman Negara rainforest

On the road - Asif on Malaysian life, more on Jerantut, more rural and remote Malaysia.

Tembeling - re-pack for the rainforest. Some flak and some flap.

Boat transfer - much more on Asif, rainforest magnificence.

On the road - Asif on Malaysian life, more on Jerantut, more rural and remote Malaysia.

Days 4, 5 and 6 were to be spent in the rainforest - a seemingly crucial compartment of the EM tour. Day 4 started with a road journey to Tembeling on the bus used in KL and a boat transfer on to Kuala Tehan in the tropical rainforest. The road journey was notable inasmuch as Asif spoke for the first time to the group about life as a citizen of Malaysia. He did this with insight and feeling. It was the first time that he had voluntarily offered such personal thoughts, voluntarily laid bare a part of himself. This does not match easily with later comments about emotional withdrawal although such paradoxes were also not unfamiliar later. He described in specific terms the day to day existence of middle income Malaysians like himself - housing, family size and structure, income and living costs. He did preface his remarks with the comment 'Well now I am going to bore you with some comments about life in Malaysia...'. This seemed to be a defence mechanism against rejection - although in fact his comments were listened to carefully.

Prior to this Asif had outlined the order of the day. He seemed content that we would arrive on time. He also reiterated that Jerantut and Kuala Lipis had been mixed-up in the 'Expeditions' leaflet but that he knew about some restaurants in Jerantut. In fact he later pointed out some of these - the route to Tembeling passed through Jerantut. Sinnead, as now seemed natural, was almost irritatingly positive about Jerantut - she reckoned that it could sometimes be good to be in such a place. The general consensus was that the group would use the empty hours in Jerantut to eat and drink. Robbi, and others, made a quick note that there seemed to be more pubs on the main through-fare than had been found in KL. This was considered to be a good point and the group clearly enjoyed one another's company enough to contemplate joint pleasures such as eating and drinking.

Apart from a quick glimpse of Jerantut the Tembeling road also offered the first real chance to see rural Malaysia (beyond Penang Island) at closer hand - with other small one street towns, kampong villages, forest cultivation and so on - as well as major development programmes such as the construction of the new east-west highway cutting through forest and sweeping through valleys on elevated bridges. On the approach to Tembeling, however, the way seemed more remote and for the first time in Malaysia school-children, for example, at the edge of the road, were unhurried enough to wave and shout at the passing bus and tourists. This drew positive comment, from Robbi among others.

Tembeling - re-pack for the rainforest. Some flak and some flap.

During his outline of the day, Asif also mentioned that there was a need to take only essential baggage on to Kuala Tehan. This would mean that non essential baggage would have to be stored in the National Park office at Tembeling. The storage arrangement appeared sufficiently ad hoc to raise some qualms about whether to store the completed research field-notes or to risk that they might fall into the river on the way into the tropical rainforest - the latter option was decided upon. However, for some members of the group the new requirement presented more of a problem. Frank considered it a shame that he had not known about the need to do this beforehand. This was a valid point - the National Park office was appended to a small open air restaurant and the unpacking and packing was carried out on the floor of the restaurant. It was also mid-day hot and humid. However, Frank did not address his complaint to Asif directly but to the group in general. Much later, on Tioman Island, Susi was to make an intriguing comment that it was very interesting to see who was unable to leave go of non essential possessions during the repacking.

Asif collected monies for the bus tour around KL the previous day, money for photography passes and also ensured that the group completed the necessary registration requirements. He also told the group that he had arranged for a boat to leave earlier than the usual departure time for Kuala Tehan. db notes recorded 'That's good, that's something special' - but there was no outward comment from the rest of the group. As it turned out each boat was powered by an outboard motor and so the earlier departure both meant that the journey was quieter than travelling in a convoy of 3/4 boats and that registration arrangements at Kuala Tehan were speeded up.

Asif was clearly recognised by the boatmen as he had been by several guides in the National Park office. Among the EM group there was a clear sense of excitement and

anticipation as they waited at water edge for a boat. The river seemed strong and fast flowing, the sun was at its height, the environment was perceived as alien and only likely to become more alien as the boat moved in to the rainforest.

Boat transfer - much more on Asif, rainforest magnificence

By chance and not design db sat within conversation distance of Asif on the boat. He seemed relaxed and talked about some aspects of his life through to the present - details which are relevant to this study because his adopted style as a tour leader seemed increasingly to be related to his previous life experience and considerable subsequent tour leader experience. In the evening Susi commented on the empathy that db established with Asif during this three hour journey:

'Asif really took to you on the boat trip - I guess that he has found a travelling companion on this tour'.

Asif had spent eleven years in the Malaysian army including what he described as the best year of his life on a training course to gain his commission. This was in Australia. Examinations had placed him third in his year - 1st and 2nd placed were sent to Sandhurst. He spent the remaining three years of his army career as an infantry officer. He regretted his decision to leave the army although not for the last time he also spoke about his wasted years in the army - he claimed that he had joined for the wrong reason - to travel and get away from life on his father's rice paddy farm in Sarawak. (Later Asif revealed that when he was a child he had believed that his father was not wise because he had not travelled. Now he was not so sure). He had passed all the survival tasks set by the Malaysian army during survival training sometimes not entirely in a legitimate manner and had indeed lived for many months in the rainforest. However, he was convinced that he had some memory defects that were brought about by the extreme severity of the tasks.

Obviously, such training had helped him when he came to take tours for 'Asian Overland'. Five potential guides had studied with him but he was the only guide from that cohort that still remained in the job. Some aspects of the training were learned on the job - he had accompanied one guide with two clients in the rainforest and had learned the round-island (Malaysia) tour in the same way. He himself had trained people on the job - although there are now only three people left in 'Asian Overland' who could do the 'Expeditions' tour.

Asif considered 'Expeditions' groups to be different from others because they relied to some extent on public transport - unlike 'Exodus' groups whom he had seen with their own truck and 'The Ramblers' with whom he had done a long walking tour of Malaysia.

Asif was very firm on the interpretation of his role:

'I am most concerned with getting everything correct - all the connections and so on.'

This closely confirmed what Asif had said in Penang about getting people from A to B and also explained his determination to enforce an early start on Day 3. For the immediate future of the tour he was clearly worried about aspects such as the train connection to Kota Bahru from Jerantut. In what seemed to be a revealing comment, even at the time, he recalled that when he did his first trip around Malaysia with 'Asian Overland' *he covered the route of the next day during the previous night*. This last point did not just seem revealing but extraordinary. All tour leaders, however, are inevitably faced with a concern to move people from A to B. With this in mind db felt that Asif had a mis-placed *emphasis* on logistics.

The conversation was not one way - the methodology on participant observation was explicit that this could not be the case. Asif asked db and the others within conversational distance - just Susi and Jane - about the jobs that they had done through time. db said that he had worked in a whole range of jobs and had even been a tour guide on Mt. Kenya. Again as a methodological point it just seemed that this was a perfectly normal and honest reply within the context of the conversation although db also hoped that such information could add to the respect that Asif would give to the questions of db on tour leadership. In db's opinion, at the time and with retrospect, this was a successful strategy. Asif queried whether db had not worried about all the arrangements on such a tour. In truth, but also to be provocative as Asif's view was now firmly established, db replied 'yes' but also said that he worried about the 'people' - how they got along together and whether, in the specific case of Mt. Kenya, they got pulmonary oedema (altitude sickness) or not. However, Asif still rated the arrangements as of key importance - more important than the people. Indeed he was never to show any obvious sign of wishing to influence group dynamics which was not to say that he did not understand people or that he did not have an interest in people. Furthermore, on the final day in Singapore he suggested that any group of more than eight members would eventually split - this almost seemed like an excuse not to consciously engender a feeling of group togetherness.

The three hour journey passed quickly not only because of this animated conversation about times past but also because of the natural beauty of the scene - increasingly dense tropical rainforest, a meandering, brown-red colored river that swirled around mud-banks, dislodged trees and branches. Of course, this lended itself to photography and there was also a considerable amount of intra-group photography. Throughout this river journey Asif was only seemed anxious, albeit in a good natured manner, when the camera was pointed towards himself. Throughout the tour he remained bemused at the desire to take photographs. He seemed to accept it as a sort of fissure line in tourist behaviour - a view with which db openly agreed whilst also arguing that the need for photographs was as a souvenir for people at home. Nevertheless, db was never comfortable with a camera in hand close to Asif. For his part Asif considered that a job as the model of a photographer was only less close to hell than a job as an insurance salesman - a job which he had indeed tried at one stage.

When asked Asif explained aspects to do with the tropical rainforest and the activity of peoples on the bank - fishing and so forth. Close to the destination, Kuala Tehan, an animal viewing hide became visible from the river and Asif suggested the possibility of staying for one night in such a hide in order to see some of the animals of the rainforest. Asif recalled the experience that he had with a group of female Dutch university students who had become extremely scared (and drunk) during an all night stay at such a hide. This was one of the few occasions that he specifically mentioned any preceding tourists. The possibility of such an activity, without the drink, together with other possible activity in the now stunning magnificence of the thick, lush and glowering rainforest that reached down and overhung the river served to raise anticipation further as the Kuala Tehan lodge was approached three hours upstream from the river station at Tembeling.

6.6 Taman Negara: Kuala Tehan

Arrival and plans.

Rainforest walk - vigorous enough although not on the wild side.

And more on Asif.

Another forest trail - more walk and talk and a memorable moment.

Expectation and culture.

Rivercascades - accord and challenge.

Pontoon restaurant - a gamble and a 'real experience'.

EM tour choice - thoughts now developed.

Asif opens up on achievement and control.

Arrival and plans

The check-in at Kuala Tehan was organised and efficient. Later it emerged that the lodge was operated by 'Mandarin Hotels' an up-market Asian hotel chain. For Robbi , the organisation and efficiency suggested an environment that was 'too tame' (Donald suggested the same sentiment) and the initial impression of luxury comfort was certainly at odds with the basic comfort of the boat journey. Sinnead commented, however, that Jon was 'in his element' and there was certainly a similarity between the Kuala Tehan lodge and the lodges that Jon would be used to from his period of employment in Kenya. Sinnead made no reference back to her expressed opinion from the previous evening about over-commercialisation and, in any case, it was Sinnead who had been least able, according to the observation of Susi, to leave civilisation behind in Tembeling.

Asif arranged to meet up with everyone in order to take an evening stroll to a hide that was very close to the Kuala Tehan camp. This stroll was duly accomplished - Asif requested quiet as the hide was approached, one of the few occasions that db considered to be in part contrived by Asif, but there were no animals in the clearing in front of the hide and the group did not linger.

Asif then outlined the possibilities for the next day. The chance to stay in an animal viewing hide did not ultimately attract anyone. However, there was a consensus about going for a walk in the rainforest to a look-out viewpoint during the morning of Day 5 and going up-river by boat for a swim next to some rapids in the afternoon. The swim activity was what Asif had intended to do on the morning of Day 6 and he outwardly

appeared to be in a quandary about another substitute activity. Jon later said, however, that he was sure that Asif would come up with something - an expression of confidence which proved itself to be correct.

Rainforest walk - vigorous enough although not on the wild side

The rainforest walk was lead by Asif in a straightforward manner. He had prepared the group for some of the possible hazards of such a walk. In particular he had warned about the possibility of leeches and during the walk he stopped and dealt with some that had attached themselves to his clothing.

Asif did not make a drama out of any other hazards, contrived soft adventure was not his style, although there was certainly a heightened sense of drama among the members of the group. Frank, who did not even go on the walk, later summed up his experience of the tropical rainforest to Asif. Without any irony he quite simply said: 'Well, we survived the jungle'. It is interesting to compare the style of Asif with, say, the style that would be adopted by a European tour leader who might have been tempted to make rather more of the inherent drama of the situation. Or, perhaps, the situation would truly have been more dramatic for a European who was less sure of survival skills in 'the jungle'.

The group seemed most concerned not just with the unknown but with the obvious threats posed by the heat and humidity, the physical effort caused by the often steep ascents and descents along the trail, and the physical distance and time distance to the viewpoint. Asif led the way but did not stop and comment on the vegetation to any extent. Neither was he asked at all frequently about this although he reiterated to db that he could recognise - with their Latin names - about 100 plants and trees.

The basis of fulfilment for the group appeared to come from the personal sense of achievement in walking through to the viewpoint(s). The rainforest provided the framework for such achievement. The interaction of the group was also important, however, and the fieldnotes initially recorded a 'good feeling, without any particular conversations', followed by a later range of conversations as evidence for such interaction - for example, Jon, Jane and Sinnead making a comparison between the severity of the walk out of the Victoria Falls and the rainforest walk (comparisons continued through the tour as intimated earlier in this report). Additionally, interaction took the form of what seemed to be a genuine desire for each of the group members to get as far as possible along the rainforest trail - at the first steep and slippery descent

Robbi helped Marje to get down without harm and this pattern was repeated so that eventually everyone arrived not just at the first viewpoint but also at a second viewpoint further on. Here, perhaps, was a feeling of equity.

The local knowledge of Asif was only more obviously tested when one part of the group became detached from the other and he managed to cut through to the detached group along side trails. He appeared to revel in this extra activity as indeed he did when making fast ground in order to check group progress along a canopy walk that had been set up in the top canopy of the rainforest. This canopy walk also served to both heighten the sense of achievement from the walk along the trail and strengthen group interaction. The walk consisted of nine wooden-slatted, interconnecting, non-rigid suspension bridges built into the top layer of the rainforest canopy. For those who admitted to a sense of vertigo, db, Jane, Sinnead and, certainly, Marje, the achievement was perhaps one of a thrill rather than actually learning something - except that the top canopy in a rainforest is very high.

The 'good feeling' was carried through to the end of the walk. The Kuala Tehan lodge was quite close to the canopy walk and the group was certainly enlivened and encouraged by the first forest trail although on the next day - for a combination of reasons but chiefly tiredness and an anticipation of even more strenuous activity - only five of the EM tourists opted for a further walk. As the group reached the lodge a number of people just said 'Well, that was good!' - and fieldnotes recorded that here was further evidence of compartmentalisation or rather sub-compartmentalisation.

And more on Asif

The walk just occasionally required close attention to the next step - or the next breath. Overall though it was not so arduous and so allowed some further observations on Asif as a tour leader - even though any conclusions were incomplete. The rainforest experience was new to nearly all members of the group - but this was obviously not the case for Asif. The conversation on the boat trip had established the role that the rainforest had played during his army training. And yet, despite observation and thought, it had not yet become *transparent* to db that Asif was essentially a facilitator, that the current rainforest experience was mild in comparison and that Asif did not compensate for his changed reality through an expressive empathy with client experience, through client involvement or through show performance. This started to become clearer on Day 6 during a second walk in the rainforest although the full reality of this perception only became completely apparent on the final morning in Singapore.

db was undecided about Asif's style - perplexed by an occasional baring of the soul and still some way off any conclusions. However, Asif's general lack of empathy, involvement and show performance was also not commented on by the *other* members of the group.

db thought back to Deighton (1994) - perhaps the satisfaction of EM members could be enhanced by greater empathy and involvement and show performance.

Another forest trail - more walk and talk and a memorable moment

The second rainforest walk, Day 6, was suggested by Asif as a morning activity prior to the return boat journey to Tembeling. Both Frank and Kate had not walked on Day 5 and Marje, Robbi and Jane also did not join the Day 6 walk - Asif estimated that the walk would take three hours and Jane assumed from the experience on the previous day that this estimate could be doubled. Although this assumption was not correct the basis for the assumption was correct. However, there was no other direct or indirect criticism of Asif and the Day 5 walk.

It was intended that the Day 6 walk would continue as far as an abandoned village of the Orang Asli (local rainforest peoples - the name was only picked up later) although Sinnead and Susi reckoned that they would walk only a part of the way. The group asked more questions of Asif than on the previous day and he became more open with his answers and offered a range of rainforest related information and stories. For example, he explained to Jon the process whereby a vine had managed to straddle the entire width of the river adjoining the trail; described how the Orang Asli collected honey from very tall trees and himself identified flowers and herbs such as wild chilly, an edible fern shoot and the fruit of a plant that was 60 times more sugar laden than sugar itself. The group responded with more questions, some of which showed almost complete ignorance of the rainforest ecosystem but which were fended by Asif with no outward impatience. Sinnead, in particular, seemed to assume that there was a team of tree surgeons who somehow worked to manage the forest - an absurdly incredulous misunderstanding - and, perhaps less incredulously asked whether there were rubber trees in the rainforest (rubber was imported by the British via Kew Gardens from Brasil in the late 19th century). The patience of Asif in this instance was stoic - indeed on reflection the distance that he had placed between the clients and himself on Day 5 might be seen as a means of not testing the patience beyond a breaking point.

At the village of the Orang Asli, Asif moved away to a viewpoint over the river probably to counter his aversion to cameras. He was soon joined by the group. He talked about the fish that it would be possible to catch and how one of his jobs as a child was to catch fish for the family. For db, this easy, non hurried conversation alongside the river, in the dignified still of the rainforest - a still broken only by the call of mostly unseen birds and the flap and sudden high glide of wings in the canopy top - was more valuable and memorable as a tourism experience than all of the more predictable tourism experiences put together.

During the walk Asif had mentioned that further along the trail, beyond the Orang Asli village, there was an animal hide. Indirect and non-confrontational but firm in his own intention he asked:

'Well, are we going on to that hide?'

db replied: 'Well, yes, if the guide still wants to go.'

'Well I would like to go - I have not been there for some time'.

And so for db, in this case alone as the rest of the group decided to return back through the rainforest to Kuala Tekan, the memorable moment was extended. Asif spoke about the Orang Asli - the objections that some anthropologists have about Government attempts at formal education and Asif's own objection to the views of the anthropologists, and the inevitable pattern of interbreeding among the Orang Asli. On one visit to a tribal group he was introduced to a chief:

'This is the Chief so and so... this is his wife... and this is his daughter who is also his wife...'

This amiable conversation was deemed worthwhile, exciting almost, both because it helped to contribute to a memorable moment and also because db intended that it would lead into some resolution of the many queries that db had stored with regard to the role of a Asif as a tour leader in the generation of both job and consumer satisfaction.

Direct questioning revealed that he had acted as a guide for the 'Ramblers Association' and 'Jules Verne'. He was interested in starting up some sort of tour guide business of his own but concentrating on Taman Negara, the Cameron Highlands and the East Coast - Tioman Island. For this reason he was interested in the costs of 'Expeditions' vis-a-vis other operators. In his opinion the Ramblers offered the best value for money and he wondered why this was so. db suggested their lower marketing costs and profit requirements. Asif continued that 'Jules Verne' were the most expensive operator but explained this by their use of internal flights. He also explained that the difficulty of starting up his own business was principally related to the cost of collateral - he had limited liquid assets because he had just bought a house. He would

also need to buy a tour-bus, the cost of which was not prohibitive, because this would 'maintain the quality' of the tour. Clearly, the transport arrangements of 'Expeditions' in particular coloured the future plans of Asif but also the unprompted articulation of the term 'quality' suggested that Asif had more than an intuitive understanding of the concept. He was aware of its use in the language of business. Indeed, he immediately continued on the same line - since 'Visit Malaysia Year 1990', when the role of tourism was first seriously addressed by Government, a lot of companies understood the business of tourism 'although it will take a long time before people on the front line are trained properly'. This last thought was a general one but also related to Asif's experience with Kuala Tekan through time. He reckoned that it had declined in quality although, on the other hand, it emerged that he had recently lost his main friend and contact in the lodge and so, perhaps, just felt more anonymous - Asif placed great store on contact with colleagues.

Expectation and culture

db asked which tours were the best tours and Asif replied with a comparison of different nationality types. Although these could be viewed as stereotypical they nevertheless provided a commentary from Asif's viewpoint on expectations - again a term that was introduced here without a prompt. The 'English' (British), with a mentality that Asif claimed to understand, nevertheless provided him with some difficulties because they did not declare their expectations. The 'Ramblers' (an 'English' organisation) provided an accompanying guide but even the guide did not declare what the clients expected. Asif considered that 'only people like Robbi know what they want'. db acknowledged the viewpoint but suggested that it was a generational thing - the younger generation is different. Asif did not comment but contrasted the English with the South Africans who said *exactly* what they wanted. Without any flippancy, Asif continued that the Dutch required two coffee breaks mixed in between all the visits and that such a requirement was difficult to provide - although it is possible to understand/reflect that given Asif's predilection to deal both with functional aspects and with sure situations he would obviously prefer the Dutch to the English.

It had not really been apparent until this conversation that a gap in expectations between a tour leader and individual clients in a group could be thought of as an almost inevitable consequence of cultural ways. Yet this was exactly how Asif approached his employment as a tour leader with an 'English' tour group. Furthermore, on immediate reflection it seemed that there was some fundamental truth in his viewpoint. However, even if there was at times some hesitancy by the group, in the

sense identified by Asif, this was at other times compounded by perfectly normal, logical questions - asked, for example, in Teahan Negara on the eve of Day 5 - which sought to discover a range of options, and to a large extent bowed to the presumed superior knowledge of the tour leader. Moreover, even when the group took some time-out to ponder on alternative activities the final decision would be made by some form of consensual bubbling to the surface rather than straight answers.

'Well, what do you want to do, tomorrow?'

'Well what are the options?'

This, instead of a conversation along different lines.

'Well, what do you want to do, tomorrow?'

'What about a walk to place x followed by lunch and a boat trip and a swim at place y.'

For Asif the more circular route only lead to extra tension. db was aware of this for the rest of the tour but did not pass on the message to the rest of the group and was able to observe a continuation of the consensual bubbling at a number of other points - with the consequent tension that this produced for Asif.

Rivercascades - accord and challenge

Whilst walking in the rainforest was the central activity that Asif organised and lead in Tehan Negara he also organised a boat trip that was 45 minutes up-stream to a natural pool that lay at the foot of a set of spectacular cascades. There seemed to be nothing extraordinary about the organisational needs required for such a trip and they were carried out efficiently - Asif presumably knew which boat-men or rather boat-boys to approach, set a departure time and collected monies at the end of the trip. This activity seemed, from observation and brief comments, to be enjoyed by all the participants even by Kate for whom the 1km. walk from the mooring point of the boats to the cascades was not entirely easy. It was obvious, too, that Asif favoured this sort of activity and in particular when a sort of competitive challenge arose to swim upstream through the lower end of the cascades - a not inconsiderable task - it was Asif who managed to succeed with the least effort. After this it was not difficult to relate to Asif's tales of challenge from his army days. If a tour leader in the rainforest had wished to instil a sense of confidence into a group with regard to sheer physical ability this would have been an excellent planned opportunity to do so. Such planning was self evidently not the case with Asif. He had showed enough physical toughness already - on the Day 5 walk. He was operating at this stage within his declared work ethic of doing what he himself wanted to do. In this instance it so happened that what he wanted to do was in perfect accord with what the group wanted to do. He enjoyed the rainforest and he was a capable swimmer - an extraordinary swimmer as it was to be revealed later on during the tour.

Pontoon restaurant - a gamble and a 'real experience'

Asif also joined the group as a whole for the evening on Day 5 - actually the first time that he had done so. Across the river from the Kuala Tehan lodge there were three pontoon restaurants that had been moored to the river bank - evidence of nascent, local entrepreneurial activity These had been pointed out by Asif on Day 4 and he had suggested which one was the best - or at least which one was the most likely to flaunt the rules on the sale of beer without a licence. It was the consensus that the group would eat (and drink) there on Day 5 as a change from the rather more conventional meal experience in the lodge itself. It has already been mentioned how decisions on where to eat were one of the major sources of tension in Asif's perception of his job. At least on this night he did not seem to be concerned about the decision presumably because he did not view himself as the decision driver - the group had simply invited

him along and had expressed that they were interested in the experience. As it turned out the actual food was of a low standard and the sale of illicit drink was not forthcoming - but the experience was enthralling. The sheer commotion and energy put into the preparation of the meal in the cramped kitchen on one side of the pontoon restaurant suggested that a meal of more substance and taste was due to be served than the paltry, emaciated fish and other dishes that ultimately emerged. But it was the commotion and energy that was enthralling. That and the hazardous nature of the return journey by boat as the boat boys, high on life if nothing else, engaged in their standard trick of waving goodbye (in the darkness) to the boat in their charge before leaping aboard at what seemed like the moment after the last moment. In Brenda's words, the meal was a 'real experience' and it was noteworthy that there were no immediate negative comments about what was the most basic meal of the whole journey.

EM tour choice - thoughts now developed

Some of the conversation in the pontoon restaurant was also of interest inasmuch as it acted as a review and rationalisation of the EM tour choice - presumably, cognitive dissonance in actuality. At the second viewpoint during the walk on Day 5 the group had met and talked with an English person, say in his early 20s, who had spent 2-3 weeks in the forest by himself over 5 day stints. His purpose was unclear and although he claimed not to be a student db later met him deep in study in the library of the Kuala Tekan lodge. He was *au fait* with the work of anthropologists who were working with the Orang Asli and with other tribes in Sarawak and Borneo and said that what he would most like to do would be to follow the Orang Asli around for six months or so. He recalled some meetings with these shy peoples and, in particular, the constant joy and fun that the young children seemed to experience. Increasingly, the tribespeople traded with the lodge and received foodstuffs in return for the clearance of some main trails. He had seen tracks of leopard and Asian elephant in the forest and had come across snakes, bats and birds and so on. The most difficult aspect of life in the forest, however, was sleeping - which he mostly did by day because of the forest noise by night. This account, on an encounter during the first walk of the EM group in the rainforest, seemed extremely adventurous and impressive. However, Jon was rather more dismissive:

db: 'You'd need to be a certain sort of person in order to do something like that...'

Jon: 'Yes, you'd need to be insane'.

db later concurred with Jon when he mentioned in the pontoon restaurant that 'Expeditions' group travel can be rather 'tame' (a word that had cropped up before in

the same context) but set such tameness against the alternative presented by the English person from the forest. Jon was not impressed and ironically queried the worth of such activity in an assumed future conversation:

" 'And what did you do in your year out?' "

" 'Oh, I spent a year in the rainforest...' "

Jon reconciled the 'tameness' of the EM tour with the days that would be lost waiting for connections and so on if a more independent means of travel was chosen. Also, in an indirect allusion to the cost - inclusive of transport and accommodation and, therefore, expensive at first glance but not so expensive in the end because of the limited spend during the tour, Jon also derided travel that sought to keep within a limit of, say, £10 per day.

'This seems to defeat the object of travel and essentially leads to a miserable experience. I have not worked out yet why I travel - oh, sorry, too serious.'

From the point of view of research, db would have liked to say that Jon could become as serious as he wished. Clearly, however, this was not possible and so db outlined the four basic tenets of travel described by the travel writer Jan Morris. Jon listened, but at the time made no further comment .

Asif opens up on achievement and control

Asif was enthused enough after the meal to return with most of the group to the bar area of the Kuala Tehan lodge. He spoke with Susi and Jane about his desire to change his life situation. They both suggested that his view was not sound because it was based on his stated assumption that he was not an achiever. Palpably, for Susi and Jane who had talked and listened to Asif on the boat journey from Tembeling to Kuala Tehan, this assumption was not shared. Moreover, even in day to day tour activities such as at the cascades Asif had shown a drive to achieve. Some group 'joshing' was already established with regard to his use of army terminology.

'Well we have reached our objective - what shall we do now?'

'Go beyond the objective.'

Asif was gratified, perhaps even slightly bemused that Susi and Jane viewed him so positively.

Additionally, for db it was now becoming clear that although the performance of Asif as the tour leader had been observed and monitored by the group over the first few days it was nevertheless the case that the job of a tour leader was inherently considered to be a worthy position by the group members. So the reality of the situation, not outwardly perceived by Asif, was that his own performance as a tour leader was

increasingly valued by the group and also that his job as a tour leader was not considered as synonymous with non achievement - as for him it so appeared at that moment.

Asif made few references to preceding groups throughout the EM tour. On no occasion did he even so much as hint that he had had notably difficult experiences with former groups. On the contrary, when db later pressed him in Kota Bahru as to whether anyone had ever left a group in mid-course he categorically answered 'no'. At the most, faced with a supposed difficulty such as a long surface journey, some clients had flown to their next destination but had then rejoined the group. Furthermore, Asif's main alternative vision was to set up a company and to run tours as a tour leader. It was beginning to seem, therefore, that Asif's view with regard to non achievement related to the incessant demands of one tour following another tour in which a part, at least, of the itinerary was not to his favoured destination. He lacked overall control. This was the epicentre of his emotional labour. The lack of control was to become almost insufferable for Asif as the EM tour progressed and recent changes of personnel within 'Asian Overland' compounded his feeling.

For the moment, however, as Asif intermingled with the EM group these were problems for the next day. He even extended his intermingling with a later game of cards in the warm night air of the rainforest on a veranda of the lodge. The rainforest was his sort of place even if he was used to wilder rainforest activities and for that moment he seemed determined, within tightly regimented limits (he left the card table precisely at midnight), to make the most of the forest and the EM group.

6.7 Downstream and Jerantut

Jungle survivors.

Remarks on equity.

Conjured from adversity - another memorable moment.

Asif - a challenge of logistics.

Jungle survivors

After the walking and the talking on the second rainforest trail the time came to head out of Kuala Tehan. The facilitation that was necessary in order to return downstream to Tembeling was accomplished without any apparent difficulty. db sat with Robbi at the prow of the boat for the three hour ride, or slightly less with the rush of the river-current behind, and as a boat bound upstream for Kuala Tehan passed the EM boat Robbi shouted across as good a recommendation as possible:

'You lucky bastards are in for a treat!'

Apart from db and Robbi every other member of the group seemed intent on sleeping for a part of this journey - a contrast from the alert anticipation of the upstream journey and perhaps a suggestion that curiosity with the rainforest had been sated.

On arrival at Tembeling the luggage was where it had been left in the office of the National Park rangers and there was only a slight delay in the transfer to Jerantut - whilst a second vehicle joined another vehicle that was ready to make the transfer.

Frank and Kate were never entirely integrated with the group and so db had to make a particularly conscious effort to garner their thoughts. The transfer to Jerantut presented one such opportunity - a few others appeared later. db shared a drink with them and Asif during the wait for the transfer vehicle and then shared the ride to Jerantut. db was not sure what they had done during parts of Day 5 and Day 6 but Frank said they they had 'potted around' in the morning of Day 5 - walking this way and that - before joining the rest of the group for the trip to the cascades. On Day 6 they had 'just relaxed' - watched a video in the library (not a particularly relevant one according to Marje). They had enjoyed the rainforest experience (a positive summary that was repeated later). Frank also made his comment about 'surviving the jungle' at this point - a phrase that was greeted rather quizzically by Asif.

Remarks on equity

Both Frank and Kate were definite in their like for the Kuala Tehan camp:

'It had both simple accommodation and more expensive chalets ...and then also accommodation such as we had.'

db was surprised by this observation - ostensibly an expression of equity, a consideration of the enjoyment of other people beside themselves. They had enjoyed the river trip (to the cascades) and in their opinion the people at the lodge (csps) were friendly. Then Frank continued to surprise. He suggested that there was a good range of food offered - the main restaurant, the more basic self-service restaurant and also the 'village' (pontoon) restaurants across the river. db thought that this was an odd comment as neither Frank nor Kate had been across to the pontoons. However, Frank emphasised that the pontoon restaurants '*were good for you others to go to...*' - which was a further expression of equity.

Nor was this the last such expression. Frank and Kate were easily diverted into stories from former holidays. In a prompt from db 'I was rather apprehensive at the start' they both said that they had expected rather more in the way of insects and mosquitoes and that a similar camp in Sri Lanka was full of mosquitoes that bred in a nearby pool of stagnant water. In Cuba, too, they had eaten dinner by candlelight during a power cut only to discover that they themselves had also been eaten by mosquitoes at the same time. This reference to Cuba and the sudden string of comments typified in the fieldnotes as socialistic and equity related invited further questions.

'So who did you travel with to Cuba?'

'Progressive Tours'.

It was difficult to disguise an ironic question:

'Mm... so is that some branch of the Socialist Workers Party or what?'

'Well, yes, (db emphasis) or at least it had been - we were guests of the Cubans in the early 1990s and travelled in a group of four communists, three solicitors and three lesbians - and one who was all three at the same time.'

Invariably, as above, all these stories had clearly been told and edited many times before and Frank and Kate knew their likely effect and amusement value. The stories were also most useful, however, in acting as adjuncts to more recent experiences - here the juxtaposition of the rainforest experience in Kuala Tehan against the experience in Sri Lanka served to confirm the positive view that Frank and Kate held of Kuala Tehan. Additionally, the story from Cuba - although negative as regards the

mosquitoes - helped to place the socialistic/equity comments in context. These were, therefore, more immediately understandable.

Conjured from adversity - another memorable moment

The hotel reception in Jerantut was prepared for the arrival of the group. The hotel was easily the worst of the whole trip - a combination of the dingy reception, unresponsive receptionist, sparse furniture and dubious cleanliness. However, in mitigation, which perhaps explained a passive response from the EM group, it was only a transit stop whilst waiting for the overnight train and several of the group had already decided that sleep was not truly on the agenda. The owner's daughter who was both responsive and friendly offered transport, at various times, to 'the best restaurant in town' - which happened to be shut. The EM group, with the exception of Frank, Kate and Marje who had opted for earlier transport, merely shifted to another nearby Chinese restaurant. By common consent this restaurant had wonderful, inexpensive food and reasonably priced drink. Moreover, for the first time on the tour, there was some interaction between the group and the locals - some other diners (in the case of Robbi) and also some of the restaurant staff (who by the end of the evening had stopped serving meals and started playing cards at a nearby table). This was a memorable moment in inauspicious circumstances - the dead hours of the night in an unpretentious restaurant in a backwater town. It was the sort of moment that cannot be predicated by the tour operator management and perhaps not even by the tour leader but which relies on circumstance and the generation of group interaction - indeed the tour operator would be well advised to replan the itinerary in order to avoid Jerantut and the tour leader was nowhere in evidence. One sub-event, paradoxically, served to cement this memorable moment - the appalling state of the bathroom in the restaurant ('alternative' guidebooks give a warning regarding such bathrooms in Malay Chinese restaurants). All except Sinnead, who predictably said that she was hesitant to spoil a good meal, ventured for a look - and all were genuinely aghast.

During the meal, there was little direct comment about Taman Negara, perhaps further evidence of compartmentalisation - except to compare the excellent food in the Chinese restaurant with the 'awful' food on the pontoon restaurant (Sinnead, however, kept reiterating the value of the experience - db fieldnotes recorded that one or other of the attribution theories must surely apply to Sinnead). On the other hand, there was talk about Kota Bahru and what to do there. Jon, Donald and db had read the 'Lonely Planet' and were aware of the markets, the craftspeople and the beach. Furthermore,

there was a general consensus, revisited elsewhere, to get a grip on the Day 8 journey south towards Cherating.

Asif - a challenge of logistics

In Jerantut, Asif clearly perceived that he now faced his biggest challenge. He had expressed his concern about the time that was to be spent by the group in Jerantut on the morning of Day 3 and had probably been concerned within himself since reading the tour dossier. Most of all, however, he was apprehensive about the train connection from Jerantut through to Kota Bahru. Asif had probably talked to the hotel manager's daughter and had arranged for coffee and cakes to be available at 2.00 am - the train was due to depart from the nearby station just under one hour later. Otherwise he disappeared from view, ostensibly to sleep, although he later admitted that this was not possible. He was clearly pleased when all the group had assembled on time and duly walked around to the station platform. This looked no different from any other station platform in any other small town and there was plenty of activity with probably twenty or thirty other passengers and the usual collection of station personnel. This was not a platform in the middle of nowhere as Asif had previously intimated. Neither was the train a phantom train although it was late by close on one hour. Nor did this lateness seem to concern Asif once he had managed to get the group to the platform on (or rather before) time. He had not arranged the itinerary and so could not be blamed for a departure in the 'early morning' as the time of 2.59am. was euphemistically described in the dossier. Also he could not be blamed for the late arrival of the train. But he could be blamed if he did not get the group to the train station on time. Perhaps, indeed, he had an intuitive understanding of the theory of attribution.

Asif had a clutch of tickets in his hand which he had presumably picked up from the station after arrival in Jerantut and before trying to get some rest. These tickets detailed the location of the sleeping compartments, double bunks separated from the train aisle by a curtain, although in reality the details were not entirely precise. Asif just seemed relieved that there were places for everyone and everyone just seemed relieved that they were clear of Jerantut.

6.8 Kota Bahru

Asif facilitates but taxi transfer causes bother.

Asif on expectations and another memorable moment - prolonged.

Tentative plan for Kota Bahru.

More facilitation - on to the night food market.

Tips on the agenda - with interim conclusions.

Asif facilitates but taxi transfer causes bother

The train moved on north through the night and into the dawn. The next that db saw of Asif was on setting down at Kota Bahru. Mobile in hand, he was talking with the reception or management of the 'Dynasty' hotel - preparing them for the arrival of the group and arranging for a breakfast to be served. This was the first time that db had noticed such background facilitation apart from on more obvious occasions such as at the Kuala Tehan lodge. Even the arrangement that allowed for the early departure by boat from Tembeling to Kuala Tehan was organised out of sight.

None of the other group members seemed to be aware of the facilitation that had gone on behind the scenes and accepted the breakfast as a normal occurrence. Indeed, Frank was not exactly overwhelmed by the set choice of curry and rice and there was heavy sarcasm directed at such a response from Robbi. Later on in the tour db also gathered that Frank and Kate had been disappointed by the taxi transport that Asif had 'arranged' for the group from the railway station to the hotel. Perhaps 'arranged' is not the correct word since the taxis that stand outside a station are hardly 'arranged' - however, that was the term used by Frank and Kate. Whilst the taxis were delapidated they were also supposedly illegal, a point that had been missed by db and fellow taxi users. For Frank and Kate this was not good enough. Asif, for his part, had said that the legal taxi drivers were loath to spend time waiting at the station, some way out of town, since the train was invariably late and, presumably, there was no guarantee of a fare.

Tentative plan for Kota Bahru

The hotel, although within the same grade classification as that in Jerantut, was much better - the reception was modern and bright, the staff were welcoming and trained in customer service and the rooms were modern and immaculately clean. Over breakfast,

the EM group decided either to go on a short orientation tour with Asif or to see Kota Bahru by themselves or to sleep - and then to get together in the early afternoon. The plan for the afternoon was to travel out of town in order to watch some fisherman and fisherwomen bring in their catch - an activity suggested by Asif but also written about in the 'Lonely Planet' guide that circulated among some of the group. Despite the somewhat confused arrangements - the plan was hatched using two different tourist maps with two different street indexes - all the group, with the exception of Frank and Kate, consequently met up in the centre of Kota Bahru. Robbi, Donald and db found Asif in the middle of a street vendor meal but he had already struck a deal with three taxi drivers. They would drive out to the place where the fishing boats came in and then wait for the group while the catch was landed.

Asif on expectations and another memorable moment - prolonged

db travelled in a taxi with Asif and recorded that Asif had come back to the earlier conversation in the rainforest on the theme of expectation. Here is a direct extract from the fieldnotes:

'Just like that, Asif asked:

"So, is this form of transport what you expect from an 'Expeditions' holiday?".

db, after thought, replied "yes".

Asif continued, "...because I am never entirely sure".

db then said that he had not liked to travel even on the (tour specific) bus from Kuala Lumpur to Taman Negara.'

In retrospect, with the knowledge of Frank and Kate's unfavourable view of the taxi journey from the railway station to the hotel, this conversation and the prior taxi incident could show not just that Asif thought back to an earlier conversation with db but also that he remained emotionally concerned enough to analyse the experience of group members - despite his protestations to the contrary. When db persisted with the conversation and asked whether there were some 'Expeditions' tourists who did not want to travel on public transport, Asif was quick to recall his experiences with 'Expeditions' tourists from Canada. He said that they had the idea, not from the 'Expeditions' brochure, that they would always be separated from the general public. Accordingly, they did not like the overnight sleeper from Tembeling to Kota Bahru. They all wanted to be in a carriage without other travellers but the Malaysian public railway was not likely to agree to such a situation unless there were enough tickets issued to fill one sleeper carriage. Warily, or so it seemed, Asif said that when he had explained this last point to the Canadians they still did not accept the explanation. Asif

relayed this anecdote - and another concerning tourists who would choose to fly between KL and Singapore in the days prior to the upgraded rail system - in a most matter of fact style without any ill-feeling. For his part, though, Asif was prepared to say that he did not like pampered travel - even though, as observed by db on numerous occasions, the pampering that would be attendant on the abandonment of public transport would allieviate much of the stress that Asif channelled upon himself.

Indirectly, Asif soon returned to the same theme of expectation. The taxi drivers duly, although not without some trouble, found the landing creek for the incoming fishing boats. These wooden boats were hand painted and had some particularly exotic sculptured prows. Eventually about twenty or so boats, slowly driven by elongated propellers, motored their way alongside the crumbling stakes and short quays that lined the creek. It was early afternoon, extremely hot and shadeless apart from inside an open fronted drinks place set with bare tressel tables and selling only locally produced soft drinks. The boats had nearly all moored, either to the stakes or to one another and all the tour group, with the exception of Donald, were in this drinks place. Here was another memorable moment. However, with regard to expectation it is worthwhile again to refer to the fieldnotes.

'Asif asked:

"So what do you all want to do?"

No reply.

"So how long do you want to stay here?"

No reply.

Then db ventured, "All day."

General laughter. Asif then said:

"That's just how I like to take things too."

Jane added "So do we." '

Here Asif was searching for some idea of the expectations within the group. Initially, however, for no apparent reason the group were cagey to give an immediate reply - rather as Asif had suggested was the case during the rainforest walk. When the group view was articulated, albeit by db, Asif revealed his intent too - a genuine intent - which matched that of the group. There was no point to run away from a memorable moment.

Indeed, the memorable moment was extended when Donald, who invariably ventured further afield than any other EM members, normally in great haste and earnestness,

appeared on the opposite bank of the creek. He was in search of the ultimate photograph and appeared oblivious to the heat. Asif spoke specifically to db and generally to the group:

'Do you remember yesterday when I asked you where all those crazy English people have gone who came and planted rubber in Malaysia when no one wanted rubber - and then just caused an enormous boom ... there's one over there!'

'Just imagine Donald in a white pith helmet!'

Here once again Asif showed that he mulled over previous conversations. Additionally, though, here was confirmation that there was sufficient group interaction, understanding and respect so that in-jokes appeared genuinely funny but not malicious and positively contributed to not only memorable moments but other moments, too.

Asif did not attempt to engage in talk with the fishermen and fisherwomen but seemed content just to watch. He was later to observe that his physical appearance did not distinguish him as a native Malaysian and that his accent was also difficult for Malaysians to place - a situation that he rather enjoyed. The implication of this was that he could pass as a non Malaysian guide and not feel obliged to interact with the locals.

Eventually, though, Asif suggested a rearrangement of the taxi groups so that Asif and Robbi could return to Kota Bahru in one taxi (later, it emerged that Robbi was not in any way as enthusiastic about the afternoon activity as the rest of the EM group) and the remaining six group members could move on to the 'PCB' high-way, a short journey across country roads, where there were reputed to be numerous good local traders selling batik, a Malaysian craft, one renowned kite maker called 'Ismail' (a craft particular to the East Coast and especially Kota Bahru) and silver-ware workers.

Although contact with locals, even buyer-seller contact was not pronounced on the EM tour, this visit to the PCB road was an exception. Jane, Susi, and Sinnead, stirred on by the stories told by Robbi, attempted some elementary haggling over prices in a number of batik places and Donald also attempted to do the same in Ismail the kite-makers place. This was perhaps inappropriate as Ismail later showed the group around his workshop where he produced just five kites a week at a price of \$25 each. His pride in his handicraft was such that he spent close on 30 minutes sewing-up two kites (bought by Jane and db) in cardboard outer containers. He then ensured that they were placed safely in the trunk of the taxis. The taxi drivers also entered into the spirit of the visit and bought miniature kites for themselves - Donald noticed this and believed that

this rather suggested the specialness of their trip. So, a part of the pleasure from the afternoon at the fishing creek and on the PCB road was derived not only from the familiarity with the people within the EM group but also from the tentative, transient relationships with the local seller-people and taxi drivers.

More facilitation - on to the night food market

Asif had not been pro-active in suggesting the order for the day in Kota Bahru although he had confirmed that it would be a good idea to see the markets and other points of interest in the town before moving off out of town to see the fishing boats and the traders on the PCB road. He did suggest, however, that the group should meet up in the evening and walk to the centre of the town where one of the day markets was transformed into a night-time food market selling all sorts of cooked food. This was one of Asif's favourite places. After getting there on foot from the hotel, the group gradually learned to trust the food preparation. At least there was such an ample choice of sellers that it was possible to reject the least hygienic fare - albeit most probably on spurious grounds. There were supposedly other alternative, fixed restaurant sites in the vicinity but it was clear where Asif was intent on eating. Here he was a gentle facilitator and brought the group to a set of tables where it was possible to sit and eat in return for the purchase of soft drink. The food market was not a place to return to - it had some colour, lots of noise, and was full of local people but served only basic food and had no charm as far as its setting was concerned as it was surrounded by functional, concrete buildings. Perhaps the fact that the group was so willing to follow the suggestions of Asif at this stage was a measure of his standing despite some troubles and difficulties and despite his own later testament of low involvement.

Although aware that on Day 6 Jon had opted not to directly engage in 'too serious' conversation about travel, db talked specifically in the food market with Jon about Taman Nagara, which Jon considered to be a success. This did not conflict with earlier indirect conversations and observations. Furthermore, db also asked Jon about whether, with all his experience of holidays, he measured each experience as the holiday went along or whether he measured the whole holiday at the end. There was some time before he answered, which db put down to careful thought. Then Jon said that he was not the sort of person who measured everything all of the time. In retrospect this did seem to conflict with earlier indirect conversations - for example, Jon was critical of Penang even as the Penang visit was coming to an end. He had also clearly assigned the trip down the east coast into a specific time compartment and had

been pro-active, although ultimately ineffective, in attempting to enrich the east coast journey. Disconcertingly, Jon then reversed the question - db answered that he both measured from day to day and also at the end. This seemed to be as neutral and non prejudicial a position as possible. In any case, the conversation did not proceed any further but needed to be re-engaged one way or another later.

Tips on the agenda with interim conclusions

A conversation earlier in the day had also given some leads as regards the temporal sequencing of measurement and assessment. On return from the PCB road and during a wander around Kota Bahru, Donald had reviewed the performance of Asif to db. There were few group conversations or reported conversations that db missed throughout the tour but Donald surprised db by mentioning that some of the group had already talked about whether they would tip Asif at the end of the tour and whether there should be a fixed, agreed amount or whether the amount should be at the discretion of each individual. db expressed the opinion that 'whether' was not an issue and that £10 was a good sum. Donald agreed to the first point and considered that £5 - £10 was a suitable sum. This was apparently the consensus view. Donald then expounded his reasoning. In the beginning of the EM tour Donald had thought 'this tour is a shambles' - at the airport in Penang Asif was *late* (a word that Donald expressed with some venom); the EM group was told to arrive military style for the tour around Penang at 2pm; and then later the delayed arrival of Robbi forced Asif to turn-up beyond an agreed time of 2.30 pm on Day 2. But since then Asif had been earning his end of tour tip - Asif was not so much a guide as someone who helped to move things along - as evidenced during the trip to the fishing boats and the PCB shopping trip.

In itself such a perspective on Asif had considerable interest. However, the anecdote also suggested that Donald and the others who were party to the conversation on tipping did analyse as they went along and did come to interim conclusions. The tipping conversation had almost certainly occurred recently - Donald was the roommate of db and openly shared thoughts and conversations. Therefore, some clear questions were raised:

How early do the first interim conclusions arrive?

Or perhaps, more pertinently:

Do people just become more certain and defined through time?

Some thoughts on these questions had already been offered and some further thoughts were to emerge during the remainder of the tour and prior to long-term reflection - for

example, on Day 10 at Tioman Island when members of the EM group were to become noticeably more certain and defined in their measurement and assessment.

Paradoxically, however, further questions were raised in conversation with Donald even as some answers appeared to emerge. As the wander continued around Kota Bahru, db asked Donald for his view on the Kota Bahru hotel vis-a-vis other EM hotels. Donald admitted, however, that the standard of the Day 1 and 2 hotel in Penang (presumed to be of some importance) had already become a blur by Day 7 in Kota Bahru. Later others suggested that they needed a diary, of the sort kept by Susi, in order to trigger details. After such a day as in Kota Bahru such amnesia seemed to be an argument in favour of memorable moments as the arbitrator of overall measurement and assessment of satisfaction. People might not remember the mundane - but they might remember the memorable.

6.9 East Coast Transit

More logistics.

Photo stops and a paradise lost.

Conversations lost and found.

From wheels to deals.

More logistics

Just prior to leaving for the food market Asif had showed that he was once more apprehensive about the logistical arrangements for the coming day - in this case an 8 hour road journey to Cherating. The significance of the administrative haemorrhage from 'Asian Overland' was now a considerable strain on Asif and actually started to have a noticeable effect at the start of the road journey on Day 8. Asif had probably envisaged this scenario. He himself had had to arrange transport south to Cherating - a task that should have been carried out by the 'Asian Overland' office rather than by Asif on the ground. Travellers moving from the south to the north had explained that it was an 'absolute nightmare' getting taxis to do the journey. However, Asif had managed to get transport south in a (licensed) car and tourist van. db remembered from tours in Kenya that 'VW Combi' vans were able to seat 11 passengers and tried to persuade Asif to put all the passengers in one van and all the luggage in the car. This attempt was made from the perspective of trying to keep the group together for research purposes and also from the perspective of interest and discussion during a long road journey. However, Asif was non-committal and Jon for one was concerned that the luggage would never arrive at the destination. In the event, the tourist van - not a 'VW Combi' - only had a passenger capacity of 10 and the group was necessarily split. But Asif was more rankled by further evidence of a breakdown in the office support to which he had once been accustomed and the mediocre standard of transport that was provided.

The essentially transit nature of Day 8 had been foreseen earlier by Jon and others but only half-hearted resolutions had been made to try and enliven the day by persuading Asif to incorporate aspects into the journey that were mentioned in the 'Lonely Planet' guide. In the event, the half hearted resolutions only spawned half hearted discussions with Asif so that the location of the few stops that were made along the route coincided solely with Asif's conception of the day.

Photo stops and a paradise lost.

The first stop was taken at Kuala Terengganu after three hours of travel. This was a prolonged stop, at the request of the group, rather than a photo stop. Asif was still prevalent towards photo stops perhaps because he noticed that for the most part people always had their cameras ready to hand and were comfortable in their use and showed no particular coyness in front of the camera. Nobody had felt strongly enough to argue that photo stops for the sake of photo stops and with no added meaning, rather than as an integral part of an experience, were essentially futile and empty.

Kuala Terengganu showed obvious signs of tourism development and investment with a new promenade along the sea harbour and a modern tourist information centre but also had other established sites that could be viewed as attractions - such as a local market selling food-stuffs (not tourist paraphernalia) and fish hauled straight off small boats, a grand house built French-style for the Sultan and a mosque.

All tour leaders may have a day when their judgement is faulty but the intention to rush the visit to this town was just one of a number of uncertain decisions that Asif took during the journey along the east coast. He also showed this uncertainty with a decision to abort, without explanation, a visit to a mosque en route (after entering the parking area) and another decision to visit a turtle exhibition and video presentation some way along the highway beyond Kuala Terengganu - the turtle exhibition was just out of sight of the most glorious stretch of sand and plunging waves that any image of East Coast Malaysia could inspire. This scene was not missed, however, by Robbi, Susi, db and later Jane. A short stroll, a glimpse of the sand and sea and surf and it would have taken a lot to persuade any person to stay away from the delights of the beach in preference to a probably familiar video presentation. But Asif missed the chance to engage the whole group in such an activity despite his enjoyment of the sea, as it emerged on Tioman Island. Jon, Sinnead and Donald, admittedly faced with a wrong option (the video presentation and exhibition were not enthralling) argued that there would be plenty of occasions to enjoy the sea - later in the day at Cherating and also on Tioman Island - although actually this was not the case and such a memorable moment did not reappear. db suggested to Asif that he should recommend the sea and sand option to the next group but he was non-committal on this suggestion. In retrospect, with all the logistical troubles that he had faced and no doubt expected to face for the duration of the trip - Asif was not enamoured by the transport provision - it seems that Asif's mind was elsewhere on plans for the future. Or, indeed, he had reached the point at which he truly did not analyse the feedback, whether direct or

indirect, from the clients. Accordingly, he was not interested in well meant alternatives for the future. Nor was his thought process sufficiently active to prepare a break along the transit route from Kota Bahru to Cherating that involved some physical activity in a stunning setting - even though only a day before the group had shown that it was interested in chasing after the unusual in an outdoor environment.

Conversations lost and found.

On the other hand, the journey did provide Asif with the opportunity to talk about aspects of Malaysia that had not been discussed previously. The shame was that he could only be in either the van or the car at one time and so there was a reduced chance for everyone to be involved and to learn during the journey. db and others who initially travelled with Asif in the van were, therefore, able to discuss something of the background politics of Kelantan, the influence of Islam and fundamentalism within the state and the economic disparity between Kelantan and Terengganu its oil-rich neighbour. This passed the first three hours extremely quickly. db felt that Asif enjoyed revealing the depth of his knowledge and his relationship with that knowledge. This was noted by others, too, at various times. For example, he questioned db's use of the term 'fundamentalism' and said that he did not see what it mean - he prayed five times a day and for him that was fundamentalist.

db felt an empathy with Asif such that he wanted him to enjoy the experience of being a part of the group. This was most probably borne of db's experience and personal understanding of the job role of a tour leader and was firmly established within Taman Negara. Asif had hinted that a part of his unsettled behaviour was due to a feeling that he was not stretched - physically or mentally. The obvious thing to do, therefore, on a long road journey was to open up a conversation and to explore some ideas. Other members of the group joined in to a degree and it appeared, when db and some others transferred from the van to the car and vice versa, that Jon carried on the discussion with Asif. Apparently, Asif provided a running commentary on the oilfields of Terengganu and Japanese inward investment. This may seem a dry topic but it was preferable to the stupor that was otherwise induced by the steady but monotonous passage along an otherwise uninspiring road with only rare views of the sea - the coast was obscured from the roadway for most of the journey.

The Cherating accommodation was reached with some relief and the chance of a swim in the sea was approached with some alacrity and glee - even if the reality did not

match the expectation that was generated for some members by the memory of the earlier beach.

Asif did not join in the activity but spent some time with the owner of the accommodation whose husband had recently been killed in a road crash. He also attempted to sort out and mend some wind-surf gear. Here was another example of Asif getting on with his own business although it was only commented on by Jon who could not work out what Asif was trying to mend.

From wheels to deals.

The group met up in the restaurant for drinks and a meal. Asif joined in and after the meal was over and after most people had dispersed he proceeded to introduce a new game of cards to Robbi, Susi, Jane and db. Asif had first joined in with card playing at Taman Negara on the night of Day 5. What was unusual was that Asif initiated the game, found a suitable place in a closed bar area overlooking the sea and then proceeded to inject the raucous wheeling and dealing that was necessary for such a game - 'stock exchange'. He was amused although clearly not bemused by the success of Robbi at such an aggressive game. This was, however, an extraordinary transformation from the hesitancy of the day and suggested to db that Asif did indeed feel that he too was a part of the group. Later this was to be refuted by Asif.

Despite the comparative ordinariness of the day there was limited comment on either its positive or negative aspects. It seemed that as in KL on the eve of Taman Negara, the EM members were prepared to hold out for presumed better times on Tioman Island.

6.10 Mersing-Tioman Ferry

Fraught connection - by choice or chance.

Fraught crossing - Robbi continues with people stories.

The journey continued with changed vans on the next morning from an 8am start through to boarding the ferry boat from Mersing to Tioman Island at mid-day. Paradoxically, the group members appeared to be more concerned than Asif himself about arrival for this vital crossing. Asif never explained his equanimity. There were severely irate passengers on board the ferry who variously claimed that it was due to leave at 8am and 11am, erroneously as it turned out, and who were none too pleased to note another set of passengers boarding an already over-crowded boat way after the assumed departure time. Asif had effectively delayed the arrival of the EM group at Mersing. He had diverted the vans to have another mis-judged photo-stop at the palace in Kuantan on the coast road and had prolonged a petrol / drinks stop elsewhere. Presumably, he had telephoned through to Mersing and he certainly seemed to know the ticketing steward who was ready for the arrival of the EM group. Even so the opportunity for a serious logistical problem had been casually approached as the vans had headed towards Mersing. This was in complete contrast to the fevered approach that Asif had adopted on the train connection at Jerantut. From a research point of view it would have been very interesting to see the reaction of Asif, the EM group and 'Asian Overland' in the event of such a problem - there were no further boats out of Mersing that day because of high swell on the crossing. Indeed, earlier in the day smaller craft had been cancelled - hence, the confusion with regard to the departure times. Unfortunately, or fortunately, this point of interest did not materialise. From later conversations it could be imagined that the centre of the blame would have been Asif. There would not have been much opportunity to shift the blame elsewhere as unlike on Day 1 at the airport and on Day 2 in Penang the EM group would have themselves experienced the build-up to the problem alongside Asif. Donald - who was probably the first to spot that the arrival time was only just likely to be met - was almost incredulous at the mis-judgement and considered that such an unnecessarily close connection was in itself worthy of blame.

Fraught crossing - Robbi continues with people stories

Asif disappeared under the deck and into the lounge on the crossing to Tioman Island - a particularly vicious Kung-Fu film, a favourite genre in Malaysia, was screened.

Whilst Asif frequently eulogised about Tioman he admitted that he dreaded the sea crossing. All except Marje moved on to the deck itself. In this instance Asif's disappearance was understandable as the sea was indeed rough and the captain's tactics to combat abnormally high swells through the cutting of the engines seemed dubious at best. Really, each person dealt with the situation in their own manner.

Robbi spent much time standing on the open deck with a beer in hand. db joined him for the conversation and also because this seemed to be the most effective way to ride the waves and to decrease the chance of sea sickness. db had over-heard Robbi's tales of Thailand during the rail journey from Penang to KL and had spoken to him at various other times about various events. On the ferry crossing, however, it was interesting that Robbi was still more than willing to talk about his experiences. Here was a completed part of his tour - no doubt edited but nonetheless still fresh and vital. He had so enjoyed Thailand and he reckoned that he could remember it *all*. He reiterated some details - how the guide did not pick him up because of the seven hour delay in his outbound flight and so how Thailand had been an adventure from the first moment of arrival; and how a train journey in Thailand was much more than a train journey - as you leant out of a window you would respond to all the people shouting and waving at the passing train. Above all, it was the *people* who made the experience and again Robbi produced some graphic and evocative images, through both outlandish and more commonplace stories, that truly underlined the essential role of *people*. In each example, though, it was not just the role of people that was so important but also the *involvement* that Robbi had with the people. All people - the locals, the hyperactive tour leader and the fellow tourists.

The South China sea was a dramatic place to be as this conversation unfolded - not just because of the heavy swell but also because the course of the ferry passed close to some small but precipitously rocky and forested islands. Eventually, Tioman itself came into view and the two day journey down the coast and somewhat hazardous crossing was about to be tested for its worth.

6.11 On Tioman - at the start

Paya Beach Resort and an abrasive swim.

Asif tensions and strains - but 'What the hell?'

Asif tensions and strains - pride and service.

Paya Beach Resort and an abrasive swim.

After arrival on Tioman at the Paya Beach Resort the EM group either dispersed off to accommodation or just sat out in the beach bar and relaxed. Asif was among one of those relaxing. The management was laid-back and brought the first round of complimentary drinks - a type of welcome that was not customary for the EM tour. Asif had mentioned in passing that it was possible to hire diving and snorkel equipment on the island. But he also mentioned that he intended to take a boat trip over to another adjacent island on Day 9 from which it was possible to dive and snorkel off the side of the boat. He also said that it always took him some time to recover from the sea crossing and that he never appeared on a beach until 5pm. So, db, Donald, Robbi and later Susi, Jane, Jon and Sinnead variously wandered off to the end of the bay where there was a particularly exotic setting - an islet covered in secondary rainforest. Unfortunately, however, the sea at that point hid intermittent flat rocks which together with the force of the waves meant that each and every bather, both from the EM group and other groups and individuals, managed to get some quite severe abrasions. Donald and others were later to protest, although not to Asif himself, that they should have been warned of the dangers. Actually, the resort manager did warn the group not to swim in front of the resort although he did not mention the dangers around the islet. Asif, for his part, seemed surprised that anybody would not get out of the water once they found that they were getting knocked about. There was a simple logic to this except that it was difficult to see just how bad the abrasions were until out of the water and, furthermore, part of the problem actually stemmed from the difficulties encountered in getting out of the water.

Asif tensions and strains - but 'What the hell?'

When Asif did emerge, true to his word as it happened at 5pm, he sat out on the beach with db, Robbi and Susi. db, emboldened by data collected over 8 days and realising that more direct questions could now be asked and analysed alongside that data, started a straightforward conversation about satisfaction. Asif confirmed what he had

mentioned directly and indirectly along the way - the present group had not been too demanding. This was not altogether a compliment. Asif had elsewhere made a link between a demanding group and increased positive mental stimulation. He reckoned that people (on the EM group) did not want to run off and do lots of things - some other groups were very dynamic when they arrived at Tioman - snorkelling or whatever. But not this group. Robbi reckoned somewhat paradoxically, since he had joined the EM tour from an extremely active 'Expeditions' tour in Thailand, that holidays were all about 'chilling-out' and not running around in a state of constant action. But there was paradox in what Asif was saying as well since he had made it clear that he would not be around to help out with the snorkel hire. The EM group felt that there was a degree of confusion with regard to what was available and as it turned out the snorkel hire man, a friend of Asif, had in any case moved away from the island. Moreover, Asif had outlined the possibility of snorkelling on Day 9. He had also not made the connection that the group had *indeed* rushed off - albeit to swim (with some painful consequences) and not to snorkel. Overall, perhaps this was another occasion on which Asif showed that he had still not understood the interests of the group.

In retrospect this conversation suggested, and by now not for the first time, that Asif did not really mind if he understood the group or not. On the other hand, he commented from experience, supposedly backed-up by other tour leaders, that 20% of tourists in a group do not interact with a tour leader.

Additionally, Asif continued that some tourists came with false expectations - he gave an example of a Japanese couple who had expected him to eat with them every night even in restaurants that were out of bounds because of his faith (EM tour members had discussed and rationalised Asif's disappearances during mealtimes, albeit with some scepticism, during Days 1 and 2 in Penang). Furthermore, in this example, he found the Japanese behaviour difficult to comprehend because they had previous experience with 'Expeditions' - Asif inadvertently assumed some degree of corporate consistency among tour leaders.

db then asked whether Asif went beyond a consideration of expectation and also considered *satisfaction*. Asif said that he was aware that he was there to serve, but that he sometimes had to say 'what the hell?' - and do what he wanted to do. db concurred to this point of view and gave a summary example from 'Hochschild' (1982) of a similar view among airline staff. Asif did not comment directly but just added to his original point - 'what the hell? - I need to get a life, too'. However, Asif also intimated that such a viewpoint was not the way that he should view the job.

Still emboldened and in line with the conversation about Hochschild, db questioned Asif further about the effect of a quick turnover from one group to the next. Asif replied that the first 2/3 days were a strain because as a guide you came from one group in which you were comfortable and met up with another group that you did not know. There was nothing surprising in this comment and it could go some way to explain the reticence of Asif during the early part of the EM tour. There were some other circumstances that had an effect too - such as the logistical problem of meeting one group in 'KL' after a flight from Singapore or overlapping tours. Also, as was the case during the EM tour, it was possible to be away from home over many consecutive weekends.

Asif tensions and strains - pride and service.

Perhaps the vestige of pride and service that Asif maintained only served to increase the strain that he felt in the job. That he still had some pride could be discerned in many ways - not least in his outward appearance, almost army style with ironed shorts and shirts and a cap with the insignia of the officer training school to which he had been attached in Australia. Perhaps the pride was also reflected in the frustration that he now felt with the reduction in personnel at 'Asian Overland'. Asif outlined in this conversation just how the change had affected him at the present resort. The operations manager had left at 'Asian Overland' and so according to Asif the whole business was run by one manageress and her secretary. On arrival at Paya Beach he had found out that he had needed to pay a cheque for the accommodation - whereas in normal circumstances such work would have been carried out by the HQ in Kuala Lumpur. There had also been other occasions on which he had been forced to make such behind the scenes arrangements. He perceived himself to be a non-creative person who took a long time to make a decision that was not automatic and he preferred to carry things out within a clear framework. It is not hard to suggest that such a perception of self would compound tension with 'Asian Overland'.

6.12 On Tioman - beyond the start

A problem encapsulated.

Island journey with some stories.

Activities in paradise - but with judgements too.

Straight-talking and withdrawal.

EM members step-up analysis -Frank and Katherine.

Towards further analysis - questionnaires as a semi-prompt.

Island departure - thoughts keep on coming.

On to Singapore.

The extent of Asif's disillusionment with 'Asian Overland' was made extremely clear over breakfast on Day 10, the second day at Paya Beach Resort. Marje had persisted since KL in an attempt to recover some clothing that she had left behind in the KL hotel. Essentially, she wanted Asif to telephone through to 'Asian Overland' and thus to arrange for its collection and carriage through to Singapore. Both Susi and Jane reckoned that Marje was pursuing Asif beyond the real need - Marje admitted in private that she was not too concerned about losing the clothing. It seemed to be the principle that she was interested in - Asif seemed particularly recalcitrant about doing anything even though he was in contact with 'Asian Overland'. Finally, in Paya Beach, Marje told Asif that *she* would pay for the telephone call - she perceived this to be one cause of his recalcitrance. He called from the public telephone in the eating area of Paya Beach Resort. There was some trouble getting through to the right person in 'Asian Overland' and after some time, clearly in response to a question on the other end of the phone, he replied with the heaviest resignation, '*Yes, I am a guide!*' This seemed to encapsulate all that he had expressed about his job situation. db fieldnotes recorded that with such a feeling Asif would soon either leave the company or lower the standard of his guiding

Island journey with some stories.

However, beyond this early vignette, the second day on Tioman essentially revolved around the snorkelling trip that Asif had suggested on arrival. A converted fishing boat with a cabin just for the helmsman and with bench seating arranged around the deck was apparently organised through one of Asif's friends on the island who also brought along a couple of crew. No money was requested from the EM group, however, and so it seemed that what had been thought of as an optional trip was actually pre-arranged and included within the overall price of the EM tour. All the EM group

participated, with the exception of Frank and Kate who were dropped off by the boat at the neighbouring 'Best Western' resort of 'Berjaya Tioman'.

The one hour journey out to the nearby island fulfilled all the exotic images that any long-haul, sun, sea and (later) sand destination could attempt to promote. It also offered the chance to meet with local people at work, earthy sea-salts too, in an authentic setting - the boat was simple but not exactly lavished with care, wooden and not carbon-fibre and low-tech not high-tech. However, neither the people dimension nor the authenticity dimension were commented on by the EM tour group.

In the prow of the boat, up-wind from the diesel fumes, Asif recalled to db how he knew Tioman from the days that he had spent training with a British army SBS unit. Seven mile training swims were not unusual and on one occasion a two and a half hour night swim had taken his company of men from Tioman out to the island that the EM group were about to visit. Jon strained to hear above the engine and commented later that this sort of story just illustrated the comparative tameness of the EM tour for Asif. Jon was probably right and Asif himself had intimated this in the rainforest. As in the rainforest, however, all of Asif's stories were not told with bravura but were rather coaxed out of him and delivered in a mode best described as matter of fact. They certainly engendered confidence in the survival ability of the tour leader - in this case in the water.

Of course, there is no way that such a similar background and character could be expected from a tour leader on a subsequent tour. Accordingly, the reaction of Asif to the reality of day-to-day life as a tour guide could be considered as *extreme* -although it had not stopped him from out-lasting all his peers who participated on his initial training course as a tour leader. Moreover it could be argued that the extreme contrast in life-style could serve to usefully *emphasise* the strains and tensions of the job and the consequence of such strains and tensions on performance and satisfaction.

Activities in paradise - but with judgements too

In the pre-reading it had been suggested that the participant observer sometimes needed to withdraw from contact with the situation. db took the actual snorkelling activity as one of the few occasions when this suggestion could be heeded, partly because of mental fatigue with the mechanics of participant observation and the consequent need for a rest, even if short-lived, partly because snorkelling was not a

favourite activity and partly because the combination of diesel fumes and the pitching and tilting of the boat had created a feeling of nausea and the need to touch down on dry land. A beach cove lay a couple of hundred metres off the boat and this provided an excellent chance to get away and feel the freedom of a vacation, to swim and to return refreshed. It was assumed that the snorkel activity would be talked about in detail in any case. This turned out to be true - without even the need to ask questions.

After the snorkelling was finished the boat moved off to a different part of the same island where there was the double attraction of a sand beach and the chance to see monitor lizards. By this time the boat had joined up with a convoy of three other boats and each boat moored in a practised routine in shallow water alongside another and adjacent to the beach. The boat men helped to hand down belongings to the ingoing people. The water was just over waist high and the sand was soft apart from a small area of broken coral. This invited comments that immediately contrasted the bay with the rock strewn bay near the Paya Beach Resort. EM tour members were now prepared to make comments and instant judgements on tour experiences from within the EM tour - even if through succinct comments such as 'Well, that was good !' This was unlike the extreme reticence to do so during the early part of the tour. Also, field notes recorded that Donald for one was prepared at this stage to analyse his enjoyment and satisfaction not only on an event by event basis but also on a day by day basis. Donald reckoned the snorkelling day to be good because there was a lot of activity. Also it was particularly good for those who had not done snorkelling before - such as Sinnead. Here was one clear example of a sense of equity entering in to the overall view of the day. This suggested that a tour group could start to function in the way that a family group functioned and in which a personal view of a day was coloured by the view of other members. The word 'view' is advised but only cautionary because Donald did not specifically mention the word satisfaction - although satisfaction was implied through the comments.

Marje considered that the scene on the beach was her vision of paradise. But the vision ended and the boats returned in a convoy to Tioman island. This convoy only added to the drama of the photographic shots that came into view with the convoy in the foreground and a background of tropical shore and tropical rainforest. The journey was broken when the convoy once again used its well practised routine to moor up alongside a jetty. This gave access to a research station / museum on marine life, an appropriate theme but in an improbable location that was only accessible by sea. There were some magnificent tropical fish clearly visible in the water alongside the jetty and Robbi, who had taken the chance for another swim, reckoned that he could have

stayed in the water all day. It was that sort of day. In time, however, the convoy moved off to the Berjaya Beach Resort where Frank and Kate had spent the day.

This resort is the most large-scale commercial development on Tioman with its 400 rooms and suites, recreational facilities such as an 18 hole golf course and several swimming pools, and an array of eating and drinking places. It appears in the brochures of the main long-haul tour operators in Britain and perhaps more relevantly with regard to its main market is linked by sea to Mersing and Singapore and also by air to Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. At the time, presumably because a protected existence at the resort seemed far too unadventurous and passive compared to a day out on the sea, it seemed beyond belief that Kate could suggest that she and Frank had had a good day. This had essentially consisted of sitting beside a pool, engaging in a few poolside chats and watching children playing around and falling into the water. Such comments served at the time as a reminder of the power of the participant observation research method inasmuch as it allowed both observations and conversations in situ. Kate's comments would either have been more easy to confirm or deny if db had also spent the day in the Berjaya Beach Resort instead of on the boat off the coast of Tioman.

Straight-talking and withdrawal.

In the early evening of Day10, after returning back to the Paya Beach Resort, db had become sufficiently confident inside the participant observation role to consider directly outlining to one or other EM client the theoretical list of six antecedents of satisfaction with examples from the EM tour. However, this required the right company and the right setting. The open air lounge of the Paya Beach with its scattered wicker and cushion chairs, sea breeze and sound of swashing waves was a sufficiently relaxed and unforced setting in which conversations could only be overheard with difficulty. db stationed himself there and waited for someone to appear - eventually Susi arrived and she was perceived to be as good as any one against which to test the emboldened mood. There were no other EM members around so that if Susi became suspicious or perhaps threatened by the observed examples, db was confident that the conversation could be ended and not carried forward by another EM member. Susi responded most to the antecedent of emotion which was perhaps appropriate given that she earned a living as a psycho-therapist. For Susi, expectation was not important. She seemed to claim that she lived in a void and that her life circumstances had taught her not to expect too much. In order to draw out a comparison with the EM rainforest boat journey db also mentioned the 'River Magic' journal article

(Arnould and Price (1993)) that detailed and analysed the pre-trip planning process, performance (with special emphasis on emotions) and recollections of river rafting in the USA through participant observation (although db did not mention the participant observation method). Susi observed, as detailed elsewhere in this account, that it was instructive to see just who was prepared to 'let go' in the lead-up to departure up the river into the rainforest. For Susi the dominant emotion was excitement. This was generated through her memory of a picture that showed her late father in a similar sort of boat somewhere in Malaysia.

Although such observations seemed to have their place in the overall construction of the satisfaction research it was not deemed to be especially worthwhile to engage in a similar conversation with each of the EM tour members. The richness of indirect conversation and observation seemed more useful than a more direct approach based on theoretical understandings and explicit terminology. It was thought to be more informative to give the outline of the antecedents with appropriate examples somewhere within the follow-up interviews.

EM members step-up analysis -Frank and Katherine.

In the meantime, it was decided to continue with the participant observation within the same framework as hitherto. However, once again as during the journey from Tembeling to Jerantut, some manipulation was required as db still felt that he had not particularly engaged in much conversation with Frank and Kate. This had been highlighted on Day 10 by their absence from the group for the majority of the day. Accordingly, after others joined Susi and db, db reorganised the seating arrangements for the evening meal (set by the management of the resort) in order to sit close to Frank and Kate. Many questions were addressed by db to Kate - who invariably sought confirmation from Frank in order to complete an idea or a sentence (indeed, it was not possible to separate them one from the other until the transit lounge at KL on the journey back to Heathrow). As suggested above EM tour members were now truly prepared to engage in analysis of the EM tour and Kate and Frank were no exception. In overall summary, Kate considered that, if anything, the tour had been 'too exciting'. This comment astonished db and initially served to dilute the positive consideration of participant observation alluded to in many instances above. For db, Frank and Kate had stood out from the rest of the group from Day 1 primarily by age (apart from Marje who was an exceptional case), physical ability, and life cycle status. They both appeared stressed by the activity, heat and humidity and lack of obvious soul-mates. They even mentioned this last aspect as of importance when describing their worst

ever holiday - a 'Jasmin Holiday' tour of India in which they were cosseted from place to place ('away from where the action lay'), were not able to talk to the local people because of the beggars and sellers and also had no companions. They knew what each other thought and so just sat at dinner staring at each other. For db, their EM tour seemed to have some of these characteristics in a milder form. However, after the initial astonishment at Kate's comment it became obvious that the excitement to which she alluded was partly negative. Travelling by early morning train from Jerantut was a surprise - a negative surprise - as was 'dashing about in taxis from place to place'. On this last point Frank reckoned that although the transport problems, detailed elsewhere, were placed on Asif's shoulders the cause of the turmoil was that of 'Asian Overland' - an interesting placement of attribution which suggested either that Frank had spoken to Asif about the situation or had overheard another conversation and had decided for himself on the direction of the blame. The exact effect of such attribution on satisfaction was not difficult to disengage. Theory would recognise the attribution as internal, stable and volitional. Only follow-up interviews could confirm whether or not Frank and Kate made a complaint - but all the evidence of the participant observation suggested that satisfaction *was* affected. It became clear that Frank had also thought for himself about the alternative logistical arrangements that could have improved the tour - centring for the most part on the avoidance of the 2.59 am train out of Jerantut.

Towards further analysis - questionnaires as a semi-prompt.

On the boat trip to the offshore island EM members had shown a decided willingness to make cross linkages, comparisons and contrasts between experiences on the EM tour. The conversation with Kate and Frank - or rather Frank as a major partner and Kate as a minor partner - had shown that even the most reticent of EM members had by this stage formulated views with regard to the tour and were then prepared to express those views both when asked and also without any prompting.

The comparisons were not just from within the EM tour. Whereas the conversations during the early days in Penang related only to previous experiences outside the EM tour, the conversations now set those experiences against the experiences on the EM tour itself. For example, in an extension to the comments about the beach in the immediate vicinity of the Paya Beach Resort, Donald remarked that it compared unfavourably with Australian beaches - it was rocky and the sand was difficult to walk on. On another occasion, in 1991, he was due to go to Paya Beach from Singapore, but went instead to Indonesia because Paya Beach was booked-up - and the beach in

Indonesia proved to be similar to the Paya Beach. A number of other EM tour members made similar comments - Marje considered that the beaches north of Auckland, NZ, were the best. There were clear expectations about beaches and beach resorts.

On Day 11 - whilst finishing off breakfast and whiling away some time before the boat transfer across to the Berjaya Tioman Resort and the hydro-foil crossing to Singapore - Asif produced the 'Asian Overland' tour questionnaire (Appendix 5). This gave some further impetus to a review process which had already started to proceed apace - although, paradoxically, Susi was openly sceptical about the whole exercise but nevertheless submitted her form, Robbi did not show any interest whatsoever in filling in the form, db kept the questionnaire for future reference and use in possible post experience interviews and Marje decided to mail her questionnaire direct to 'Asian Overland'. At the most, therefore, Asif received seven out of ten returns. Certainly, in the case of Jon, Sinnead, Donald, Jane and Susi the time taken to fill in the questionnaire ranged from 5 -10 minutes and so the level of detail was low even among those who responded - although, on the other hand, there was no apparent agonising over responses which in retrospect could suggest that views were already crystallised.

Momentarily, db thought to ask EM members for a glance at their replies - the questionnaire covered just one side of A4 paper - but it was thought that this would have seemed to be rather over inquisitive. In any case, it would have been difficult to have precisely recorded all the information. db even thought to ask Asif for a look at the set of completed replies but rejected this notion on the same grounds. Accordingly, as a compromise, it was considered that the EM tour members would be able to recall their replies at a later date if deemed necessary particularly and presented with a blank 'Asian Overland' form (for instance, at the post experience interviews which were increasingly favored as a further element in the triangulation of the research method).

Actually, too, it is important but sufficient to state here that the questionnaires showed all the deficiencies of questionnaires traditionally employed by tour operators and detailed elsewhere (see 4.1) - and so db was immediately dubious of their worth.

The moment passed and db decided not to specifically and systematically explore the contents of the questionnaire responses. A cursory glance suggested that neither Susi nor Janechose to write much down - it did not seem arrogant to assume that the richness of the participant observation study eclipsed their hurried scribbles. Kate

and Frank filled their replies in elsewhere but db was more confident after Day 10 that their views were clearer than before. In addition, Donald had been the most Frank and outspoken tour member, although not threatening or imposing, since the early stages of the tour and db felt that his views were clear, too. Even just before the questionnaires were given out Donald had suggested that there was a need to sort out the itinerary on the east coast - maybe through a stay of an extra half day in two locations and the extension of the tour. Finally, Sinnead and Jon chose to review their questionnaire answers to the rest of the group. Unusually, Sinnead spoke in tandem for Jon:

'We just said that something could be done about the East Coast. Kota Bahru was worth it, but the hotel at Cherating was not much up to it...'

Jon added, inimically, that the hotel (management) at Cherating would have had difficulty running a bath (yet alone a hotel).

Sinnead was motivated to fill in her form with the probably mistaken assumption that 'Asian Overland' would take some notice of what she said. db did not disabuse her of this assumption. Apart from knowledge via observation in England of the off-hand way that tour operators may deal with questionnaire responses, it was possible to notice, too, the low priority that Asif assigned to the forms. They emerged crumpled from his bag and were handed out in a manner that suggested that Asif could not care less. He never asked db to return the questionnaire - even though db for his part did not suggest that he would mail a reply to 'Asian Overland'. With relevance to client views on satisfaction through time, the genuine feeling of db was that the client review of the EM tour and its components was well under way at this stage and did not need a sub-standard questionnaire as a catalyst.

Island departure - thoughts keep on coming.

With the exception of Susi and Marje who had opted for an extended stay on the island, a different converted fishing boat from the one used on Day 10 transferred all the EM tour members, in a heavy swell that added some sense of adventure to the departure, around the coast to the jetty at the Berjaya Tioman Resort. It was known from Day 1 that Susi and Marje would stay behind on Tioman. There was some outward but controlled display of emotion. Sinnead reckoned that she always found it difficult to leave an island - and the more so when there were people left behind that she knew. However, the first stage in the dissolution of the EM group was met with overall equanimity although a sense of friendship and warmth was carried through to Singapore - Jane initiated a letter (left at the hotel reception) in which each group member made some suggestions about the attractions and so on of the city-state.

The brief flurry of interest in the questionnaire per se had finished by the time of the transfer. However, sheltering out of the sun and happy in conversation, Sinnead reflected that the holiday was good - an evaluation that she was again to reinforce later in the tour. However, she could find negative points about the accommodation at Paya Resort and found it difficult to believe that Singaporeans would put up with poor accommodation. db concurred - the shower area was delapidated with insufficient water pressure and poor tiles; the door to the bath-room was made of plywood and warped at the base; there were only skimpy towels, no radio, no television and just one small chair... but the food and eating area was good and the management helpful. This was probably as negative as Sinnead became throughout the whole tour and, indeed, she mixed such mild negative thoughts with a defence of the use of the 'sleeper train' overnight between Jerantut and Kota Bahru. She said that it had been rather fun to go by sleeper although she implied that she had only felt safe because she was surrounded by other EM tour members - the bunks were only divided from the corridor by a curtain rather than a fixed partition. This was a perceived weakness identified, too, by the Canadian group that Asif had earlier talked about.

One other point that Sinnead mentioned whilst waiting for the connecting hydrofoil was that it was good that the holiday was split-up into different parts. She said that she was quite looking forward to Singapore and that it was good to have something to look forward to every day. Given such an obvious geographical split from one period to the next in such a tour as EM - but also in all other tours that are not entirely sedentary - it is perhaps not surprising that a client determines some sort of summative

level of satisfaction based on a range of summative parts and that there are going to be some major discrepancies between the component parts of that summative level. Furthermore, there may well be discrepancies even within specific components. For example, whilst Donald was not too pleased with the beach outside the Paya Beach and was disgruntled that Asif did not give notice about the underwater rocks he was very pleased with the whole of Day 11 around the coast of Tioman - and especially the surprise of seeing monitor lizards on the off-shore island. Therefore, Tioman Island, which was one of his prior perceived highlights met up to his expectations.

In this part of the analysis, too, it is possible to say that Donald *did* have expectations. Middleton suggests (personal communication 12/06/96) that it is unrealistic to suppose that tourists are able to rationalise their expectations to the extent that theory suggests. Certainly, however, Donald was able to say what his expectations were and constantly sought to evaluate those expectations even if specific memories were sometimes lost - such as the difficulty that Donald has remembering the physical form and layout of the hotel in Penang by the time that he got across to the East Coast. Furthermore, the participant observation suggested that Tioman Island was a *key* expectation (along with Taman Negara) and for Donald it was essential that such a key expectation was met.

But perhaps Middleton was more right than wrong. All the group members did not have equally clear expectations and, indeed, sometimes did not have expectations *at all* in particular times and places. This comment represents the true reality - even if it works against the generation of neat but spurious conclusions. In the conversation on Tioman, Susi suggested that she travelled without expectations; both Susi *and* Jane did not truly know where they were headed on the day after Kota Bahru - which rather suggested that at least during that stage of the tour their expectations were rather rudimentary; Robbi just picked up the whole vacation by default and so did not have pre-purchase expectations; Kate followed Frank's lead and had difficulty even paying for a round of drinks - she had no elaborate strategy for the vacation time ahead; Jon, to his expressed surprise, had no idea about the Muslim nature of the country and might have found an alternative destination if he had known in advance - although, he observed that the strength of fundamentalism was such that the role of women appeared to be a less subservient one than in the Middle East (where he had worked as well as travelled); and db, too, was sometimes imprecise with regard to expectation, even from a geographical point of view (a perceived strength) - the length of the East Coast was not appreciated in advance. Perhaps only Frank had consciously and systematically done some background research. On the other hand, his personal

guidebook lacked anything beyond surface knowledge and the 'Lonely Planet' series was probably unknown to him or at best rejected as not his style of book.

Therefore, with the participant observation evidence up until departure from Tioman an elaborate theory with regard to expectation was perhaps too pretentious to contemplate. Expectations could be formulated through sources presented by the tour operator and a carefully balanced and logical selection of other sources, notably experience. Alternatively they could be generated by a multifarious further collection of sources - right down to largely unpredictable elements such as db's pre-trip image of Malaysia created from exotic stamps collected during childhood, extraneous current affairs newspaper articles on Malaysia, Malaysian restaurant meals in England and the character of numerous Malaysian students.

On to Singapore.

The journey from Berjaya Tioman Resort was uneventful - so uneventful that there was barely an entry in the fieldnotes and for a large period of the journey the majority of the EM members merely slept. The hydrofoil was modern, organised and large enough to skim over or through all except the largest waves. This was soon apparent and banished any thoughts of sea-sickness. Here was advanced technology that was in sharp contrast to the converted fishing boat. The catering was limited but in any case the staff only accepted Malaysian currency. Even such an unhelpful money arrangement barely mustered a comment - and so there was little to relieve the stupor of the journey. This was no repeat of the journey from Mersing to Tioman and, indeed, the journey only shed its sedative effect when Donald (predictably) found a way out on to a narrow deck at the back of the hydrofoil. From here it was easier to understand the impressive mechanics of the hydrofoil and from here too it was possible to more easily appreciate the quantity and immense variety of shipping that was honed in on the port of Singapore. The appreciation was quick, too, that the up-coming visit in Singapore was likely to be very different as an experience from that of Malaysia.

6.12 Singapore

An end of tour perspective - Asif on satisfaction, some more tour overviews.

More insights.

Last chance with Asif.

Final chances with EM group.

An end of tour perspective - Asif on satisfaction, some more tour overviews.

The contrast between Singapore and Malaysia was confirmed by the ultra efficiency of the passport procedures and the port terminal facilities. The 'Asian Overland' transfer was waiting outside the terminal and within thirty minutes the EM group had reached the downtown Miramar hotel. There had been no opportunity to eat since leaving Tioman and so the group both sought advice from Asif with regard to an eating place in Singapore and asked whether he would like to eat with them. He was customarily reticent but suggested the 'Lam Pa Sat Festival Market' - an under-cover market place converted into a local fast-food eating place. Furthermore, he volunteered to show the group the working of the underground system on the way although he mentioned that it was also a really pleasant night-time walk from the hotel to Lam Pa Sat. db queried, therefore, whether it was possible to do this but Asif merely nodded to Kate and Frank with the implication that they would suffer from the distance of the walk. db mentally recorded mild surprise - after the range of comments and actions that Asif had made during the tour - that he still thought in terms of the welfare of individuals within the group. Perhaps, Asif did not want the walk so badly for himself.

Time really was short at this stage for further conversations with Asif. It had become obvious that whereas it was possible on return to Britain to resolve points of uncertainty with all other members of the group this was not so possible in his case. A return journey to Malaysia for this particular research was out of the question. Accordingly, prior to the meal at the Lam Pa Sat, with no other member of the group present at the table, db asked Asif a direct key question.

'So, what do you think is the satisfaction of the group from this tour?'

Asif's reply was thoughtful, but immediate and brief.

'I don't know, it's just another job finished for me.'

db alluded back to the conversation in Taman Negara (which Asif instantly remembered) and said that he would send Asif a chapter of 'The Managed Heart' - the basis of the conversation about people and system stress among airline staff. Asif was quick to note 'so that is how you know about airlines' and merely queried whether it was not possible to send the whole book. db agreed. This discussion with Asif concerning 'The Managed Heart' suggests that even in the midst of observation and conversation it had become apparent to db that there were lessons for the management of 'Asian Overland' and 'Expeditions' to learn from the day-to-day work experience of Asif. Many of these lessons were connected with human resource and internal marketing systems. Effective monitoring and consultation with tour leaders together with ongoing development seemed to offer the possibility for immeasurable improvement in the work experience of Asif. Perhaps this would change his view of his job. Perhaps, too, this improvement would have a positive effect on the tourist experience.

Asif's answer summed up his relationship with the EM group, also seemed to sum up his relationship with other preceding groups, and summed up the relationship that some writers in the field of marketing management and personnel management had cautioned against from a theoretical and practical viewpoint. This was a devastating and memorable research moment in which fumbled half-understandings and half-thoughts on the EM tour, the role of Asif on the EM tour and the generation of satisfaction were distilled into one reply that somehow encapsulated so many of the participant observations. For Asif the job was not special, the EM tour in general was not special, the people on the particular EM tour were not special and, perhaps most influential of all, he did not see himself as special. Although he was not entirely able to de-programme himself from his overall life view of service, in the army or in the travel industry, he was sufficiently de-coupled so that whereas he instinctively thought about the well-being of individuals (evidenced only slightly earlier in his decision to travel on the underground rather than on foot on the way to Lam Pa Sat - ostensibly because of Kate and Frank) he also thought about his own well-being too. Of course, it is possible to argue that such a position is a mature position and that perhaps a company should accept and even encourage the adoption of such a position among its employees - as long as the position that is assumed is a relative one and not an absolute one. However, in the instance of Asif the assumed position was dictated by Asif and not suggested by the employer - 'Asian Overland' or, consequently, 'Expeditions'. This is what could be deemed to have the greatest potential effect on satisfaction. For, viewed from the perspective of the EM clients the overall expectation was that the tour company was special, that the EM tour compared to other 'Expeditions' tours was

special, and, finally, that the performance of the tour was special both with regard to the tour leader, other employees of the company and other service personnel, the other people on the tour and the clients themselves - as well as with regard to all the natural and man-made attractions, the facilitation, the accommodation, transport and so on. A tour leader had the capability to filter many of these wishes and influence the performance. But perhaps for this to come to full fruition assumed an essential prerequisite - that the tour leader was actively employed in the filtering process and was actively evaluating the filtering process. Although Asif possessed the potential to do this there was not much doubt from db that his view of his job, so succinctly summarised in the one reply above, affected his ability to fully realise his potential.

On the other hand, this view was tempered by the view of Sinnead who had volunteered to make a tip collection for Asif and who prefaced her collection duties with the upbeat:

'He was more than a guide, really, wasn't he?.'

No one refused to contribute, although Marje gave a separate tip, and most people gave about £5 in Malaysian or Singaporean currency. This produced a total of about £40-£50 which was not inconsiderable in terms of the cost of living in Malaysia, as outlined by Asif himself on the road to Taman Nagara, but which does not compare with the tips that can be earned by guides in Europe.

More insights.

Sinnead started her collection on a walk from the Lam Pa Sat over to the Raffles Hotel. Asif was now thoroughly way-laid from his personal plan for the evening which had been to watch two action movies on tv at the Miramar Hotel. Here again was evidence of the contradiction that Asif could not let go of some elements of service duty. He initiated and posed for a photograph in Raffles Bar with one of the bar attendants - even with a drink in hand which given his rejection of alcohol seemed at the time to be rather strange (although it made a good photograph). This almost cast a snook at the surface understanding, temporariness and conviviality of tourist existence although from the conclusions already suggested Asif would not have posed in such a manner if he had not wanted to do so.

The EM group left Raffles and wandered through the Government area of Singapore and on to the Boat Quay, thronged with Singaporeans drinking and eating in the open-air and in a party atmosphere - which Jon compared to street-life in Sydney and which Donald compared to the Edinburgh Festival. Sinnead reckoned that it was good to *finish* the tour in Singapore - it would be too forbidding a city to start from. From that point of view Penang was a good start place - although Sinnead also added to common consent that 'I would not want to be there tonight'. So, perhaps this near end-of-tour evaluation rather tempered some of the earlier, partially concealed but nevertheless real criticism of Georgetown and Penang Island which were formerly deemed to be too small to hold the interest of some in the group (*all* those on the Boat Quay - Susi and Marje were on Tioman and Frank and Kate had returned to the Miramar) for longer than two days.

Surprisingly, or so it seemed at the time, Asif did not move back to the Miramar with Sinnead, Jon, Donald and db but spent the night through to 2am on the Boat Quay front with Robbi and Jane- his original plan was now truly abandoned. But from what became clear about Asif - mainly on reflection despite Asif's straightforward self-analysis (most recently in the Lam Pa Sat) - he would not have abandoned the original plan unless *he* had so wanted to do so.

Before leaving the Boat Quay the EM group agreed among themselves to meet up at breakfast. Of course, Asif was invited too. He duly appeared a little embarrassed by the presentation - although no doubt he had been aware of the reason for the morning get together. Only Robbi did not appear.

Last chance with Asif.

As far as several of the group were concerned there was one remaining problem. Asif was not able to get through to the KL offices of 'Asian Overland' in order to book a city-tour. Eventually, Jon, Sinnead, Jane, Frank and Kate went with another tour that picked-up from the hotel and happened to have spare places. But Donald, who had keenly observed Asif's attempts to contact the KL office was forthright later in describing the attempted arrangement as a mess.

Neither Donald, Robbi or db had any intention to take the city tour. db was intent to question Asif some more and for a final time before he left for KL. With some relief db met up with Asif in the lobby of the Miramar and managed 20-25 minutes on a one to one basis.

Asif reiterated that he was not greatly concerned with group dynamics - a point that had become clear through conversation on the boat journey through to Taman Negara. Even when db made a parallel (once again) with the facilitation of a group spirit on the db walking tours up Mt. Kenya and also with the need for an *esprit de corps* in the army Asif did not really acknowledge the potential role for a group leader in the facilitation of group togetherness - and many of his actions from Days 1 and 2 in Penang confirmed this conclusion.

He established again that in normal circumstances (and he clearly did not consider the present EM tour to be entirely normal because of the difficult communication with KL) it was the choice of places to eat which placed him under the greatest pressure. Specifically, even on the previous night he was concerned because in the past some clients had arrived at the Lam Pa Sat and then left because of the noise of the music amplifiers (which blare out current Singaporean pop music). Asif felt that the blame was put on him when things did not turn out right. db disagreed with this conclusion - in order to provoke further comment and also because it was what db thought. db mentioned how in his opinion Asif had introduced potential meal places with some subtlety and success. For example, on the previous night Asif had gently said that 'there is one place that I know when in Singapore' and then proceeded to take along the whole group - and at the time that he favoured (7:30pm and not 8:00pm). Furthermore, the whole group response had been favourable. Indeed, other positive meal experiences which owed much to his suggestions had been *communicated* to him in the past - such as the positive experience in the 'Hong Kong' in Penang on Day 2.

But the communication had not been *registered*. Even without the benefit of reflection db fieldnotes recorded that:

'db does not believe that Asif has taken much new thought from this particular group. Otherwise, he could have started to modify his views about many things - meal (decisions), for example.'

Crucially, Asif showed no intention of changing the fundamental apprehension with which he approached this inescapable element of his job. This was fundamental to his own satisfaction with the job as a tour leader - or rather, it helped to contribute to his permanent dis-satisfaction. He had to confront it daily in his work and seemed not to have come to terms with the fear of rejection.

db had already explored Asif's views on the specific view that he had with regard to client satisfaction on the present EM tour. Accordingly, with time rather short, db further concentrated on Asif himself and his own satisfaction. With regard to the dis-satisfaction that was apparent from the length of time spent away from home Asif saw no immediate solution - unless he quit the job and either took some time off or worked as a free-lance guide. Indeed on Day 12, a Saturday morning, he had no idea whether he would be required to work on the coming Sunday - and favoured a city tour of KL because that would be easy to conduct. With regard to the longer term, beyond the immediate decisions that would be faced on an upcoming tour, Asif again suggested by implication that he was under-achieving and that he was intent on changing his life circumstances. So here was confirmation, although by now no confirmation was required, that Asif's overall satisfaction was affected by more than the immediate satisfaction of the day.

Robbi arrived in to the lobby and this abruptly ended the conversation. In any case, it was felt that there was enough material available from the participant observation to form a clear view of Asif's role in the generation of group satisfaction, his view of that generation and also his view of his own satisfaction with the role of a tour guide.

Just one more time Asif apparently contradicted his own stated view that each tour is just another tour. Although there was clearly no obligation to do so, he offered to help Robbi and db to find some hi-fi equipment. As with so much before he did not lack for information. On the way he also continued to talk about Singapore:

'Take a look at those buildings - that is what the whole of Singapore looked like in the 1960s... That's the edge of Chinatown and those buildings cannot be pulled down because they have a preservation order...'

This was all beyond the call of duty. Actually, hi-fi in Singapore was no longer cheap and so the search quickly came to an end. It was mid-morning and presumably Asif had a train to catch to KL. A quick handshake, an excuse about wishing to find some things for himself, and he sauntered away down a Singaporean sidestreet. Paradoxical to the last he helped out when this was in no way expected - from interest, from duty, or whatever motive known or unknown to Asif himself. And so he let go with no protracted farewells and was on to the next job - whenever and wherever and with whomever and for whatever tour operator that 'Asian Overland' had obligated itself to.

Robbi returned to the Mirimar and for the first time in nearly two weeks db was able to enjoy freedom of thought and action.

Final chances with EM group.

The EM group met together in the evening - apart from Frank and Kate - and moved off first to a second experience of the 'Lam Pa Sat' before returning to the 'Miramar' for a final drink. These get-togethers occasioned a disparate wide-range review of the EM tour which helped to confirm and extend a number of points.

Asif was obviously one of the topics of conversation - as if to confirm the key role of such a player. Donald considered that Asif did not face up to problems but rather let them drift in the hope that they would sort themselves out. His immediate example was the dithering over the city tour in the morning of Day 12 in Singapore. Donald remembered, too, the perils of the rocks at Tioman - if the EM group had been from the USA Donald was of the opinion that Asif would have been sued. He also remembered the way in which the tour leader on a previous tour to Egypt had warned him not to travel in to the desert area with contact glasses because dust trapped under the contacts would irritate the eyes. Such attention to detail was the difference between a good guide and an excellent guide - and the implication from Donald was that Asif was the former and not the latter.

All were of the opinion that the 'Expeditions' tours were rather tame for Asif. In contrast to his reminiscences about the army Jon considered it to be highly unlikely that he would be talking about 'Expeditions' in 10 years time. Beyond that all the EM group in Singapore seemed sufficiently aware of his pending decisions on the job path - and, moreover, they seemed to care about his future. Jon reckoned that there were a lot of jobs that he could do well - based both on his command of English and that he was easy to get along with.

On the other hand, the EM group were not aware of Asif's agonies with regard to meal decisions. db summarised Asif's difficulties and Sinnead more or less confirmed db's response to Asif:

'... in general everyone of us seemed happy when he suggested something because otherwise we would have had no idea where to go...'

db likewise summarised Asif's clear statement that he no longer analysed his tours. Sinnead offered a characteristic, commonsense response - perhaps based on her experience dealing with the public:

'I suppose that that is inevitable, really.'

Of course, it may not be inevitable but no EM tour member made any initial connection between Asif's statement and tour satisfaction.

Most of the recollections and views with regard to the day by day events were not new and have already been outlined *although* there was an interesting comparison of the negative and the positive - Penang was 'slow' but had an excellent restaurant (the 'Hong Kong'); KL was without the benefits and plus all the disbenefits of a big city '...but it sounds rather exotic and you would feel that you had missed something if you had not been there...' (Jon); Jerantut was a no-where place '... but I sort of thought that it would be ok and if there was anything likely to happen we would be where the action was...' (Sinnead); the 2.59 am departure from Jerantut was a surprise '...but you've got to remember that we travelled all over Malaysia and there were not many other options in terms of train times - there were only two trains a day north out of Jerantut...' (Donald). This juxtaposition was new - at least in its clarity. During the early days of the tour - through and beyond Kota Bahru - comments were generally positive. On Tioman, there were intra-tour comparisons that elicited positive as well as negative responses. At the denouement these positive and negative responses had become more specifically defined.

Taman Negara, though, only had positive comments - seemingly here was a fulfilled highlight.

This informal and impromptu EM review also brought forward some comments on tour members - naturally, absent ones (Marje and Susi were still on Tioman; Frank and Kate had not arrived down at the meeting point as they had decided to extend their tour of Singapore; and after the meal in the Lam Pa Sat, Robbi had quietly slipped-off to the red-light district of Hong Kong).

So, Marje was remembered with affection, specifically with regard to her absurd over protection against largely non-existent mosquitoes in Taman Negara and Sinnead certainly mentioned that she was 'rather special' and would like to meet up with her sometime.

Robbi meanwhile was considered by Donald to be the only really 'wild card' on the tour although when db suggested that he was not *so* wild Donald easily concurred. Also it was interesting to note that although there was a certain wariness about Robbi several members of the group had independently and sympathetically considered Robbi's *enjoyment* of the tour. Donald, for example, said that he had felt sorry for him at times - the system of room rotation among the three single women travellers had not been copied by Robbi, Donald and db so that Robbi was always on his own. Donald reckoned that this could be difficult on times and he remembered back to the morning in Kota Bahru when Robbi had insisted that he wanted to come around the market place and town with Donald and db rather than stay on his own - as Donald and db had tacitly assumed. Sinnead, too, commented that in her opinion Robbi had probably *enjoyed* himself - she had listened to the earliest account of his travels in Thailand and had been the first to be concerned about the contrast in activity and style between his first tour and the EM tour and between Malaysia and Thailand. There was no directly stated suggestion of a link between the perceived enjoyment of Robbi and the enjoyment of Donald and Sinnead - and the word 'satisfaction' was not mentioned - but there was an intuitive suggestion.

The only negative comment offered about other group members came from Donald who reckoned that Frank was not selfish enough with his wife - he should have insisted and she should have allowed him to go off for half a day in the rainforest. Frank had the most sturdy boots of anyone in the rainforest - and they remained the cleanest.

Actually, though, there was another side to this last perception. On the morning of the return flight, during the transit stopover at KL airport, db managed to get some time with Kate on her own. She considered that Frank was quite pleased with the enforced restriction placed on his activity by her hip problems - he, himself, had an arthritic knee and did not want to move around too much:

'There comes a point when you have got to accept that you are too old for this sort of thing'.

This last conversation also afforded the opportunity to catch up on Frank and Kate's final day in Singapore and to get one last overview of their tour - actually

the first overview from the perspective of Kate alone. db prompted Kate by asking whether she had had any surprises on the EM tour. Singapore was a surprise - it had lots of 'lovely green areas' and was very clean (lessons could be learned in Coventry). She asked whether the EM members had hung around waiting for them at the end of Day 12 in Singapore although db sensed that she was rather more proud that she and Frank had found so much to do that they could disinterest themselves from the final meal and get together - they were still on Sentosa Island at the meeting time. The range of transport, too was a surprise - she had not thought that there would be so many types - the experience with the taxis at Koat Bahru rail station also rankled. On a broader theme she had expected Malaysia to be more like Sri Lanka - it was not and so that was a disappointment. Moreover, Malaysia was not her first choice but she left all the decisions to Frank. She remained disappointed, too, that the tour had not gone to the Cameron Highlands. She did not like Penang but she enjoyed Tioman Island - although two days was long enough. db suggested that the other resort at Berjaya would have been better but Kate did not agree. The other resort was too commercialised - Kate liked the Paya Beach Resort because the staff knew your name very quickly. The meal times were special because of this - the restaurants in the Berjaya Resort were very large and there would not have been the specific personal touch that was present at the Paya Beach.

So, at the last, and this was practically the last conversation of any substance on the EM tour itself as each tour member was allocated a separate space in the aircraft back to London, it seemed that after a hesitant start even Kate had developed specific views about the tour. She contrasted the tour as a whole with other tours and also contrasted the sub parts of the EM tour itself.

The immediate feeling of the researcher as the group dispersed at Heathrow, London, was that the participant observation had been successful - the method had indeed allowed the collection of a considerable quantity of rich and meaningful data. This was to become more apparent during the more focussed and formal analysis and interpretation that followed.

Moreover, the research had been great fun. As Wood (1995 : 367) argued the process of qualitative research should not become one of '... a wearisome and even threatening necessity.' The participant observation certainly possessed neither of these characteristics.

Chapter 1 Introduction	Chapter 2 CS/D - Antecedents and antecedent temporal process	Chapter 3 Context	Chapter 4 Methodology	Chapter 5 Management interviews	Chapter 6 Participant observation	<div>Chapter 7 Interpretation</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Overview◆ Interpretation framework◆ Antecedents and CS/D◆ Context◆ CS/D Judgement◆ Action and Inaction◆ Beyond action and inaction - CS/D through time</div>	Chapter 8 Final overview
---------------------------	---	----------------------	--------------------------	------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	---	-----------------------------

Chapter 7: Interpretation

7.0 Overview

Description inevitably entails analysis simply because the choice of what to describe in itself implies an analytical decision making process. For example, the ethnographic, narrative style account of the case study moves beyond *description* and into *analysis* because despite its detail it is nevertheless a *representation* of reality. In some relevant instances, too, the ethnographic account engages in rather more direct analysis - whilst attempting not to disrupt the flow of the narrative - and it was for this reason that the narrative was placed within the body of the thesis rather than in an appendix. A similar approach to description and analysis has been applied throughout the construction of this thesis.

However, it is the purpose of this chapter to provide *interpretation* and to move beyond description and analysis. Accordingly, the *interpretation* that follows is presented as a synthesis of each source of data and analysis encountered so far - the existing theory from the *literature search*; the *management interviews*; the *participant observation* and the subsequent *consumer interviews*.

The addendum should be added that the researcher has made every effort to ensure validity and reliability within the research process (see 4.4.2). Also, the researcher has considered and argued the benefits and disbenefits of *single* case study design - and chosen such an approach rather than *multiple* case design (see 4.4.1). However, the researcher nevertheless recognises that the chosen approach might be viewed as an inhibitor to a completely generalised interpretation.

Consumer Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction (Within Tour) For Micro-Event X

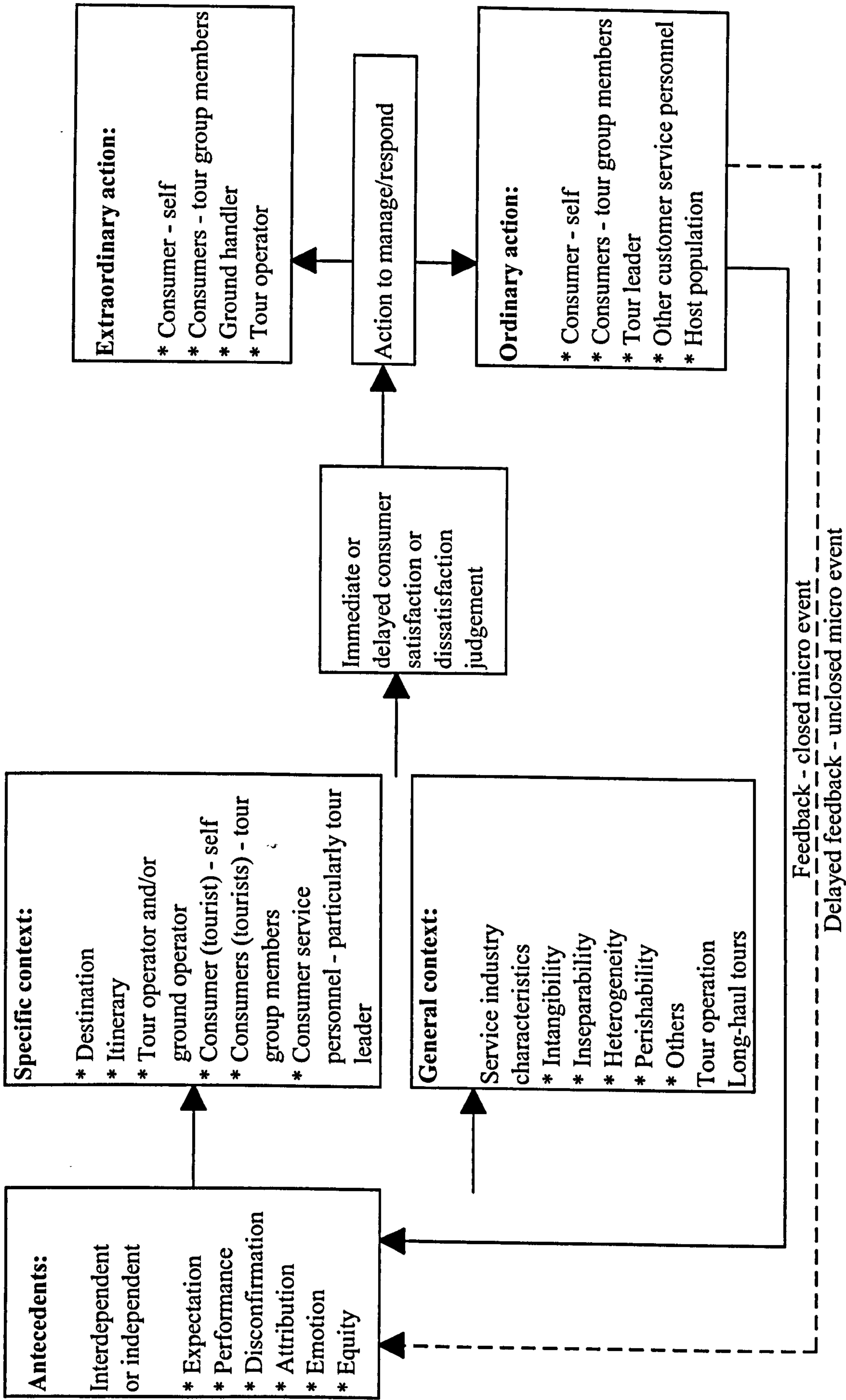


Figure 7.1

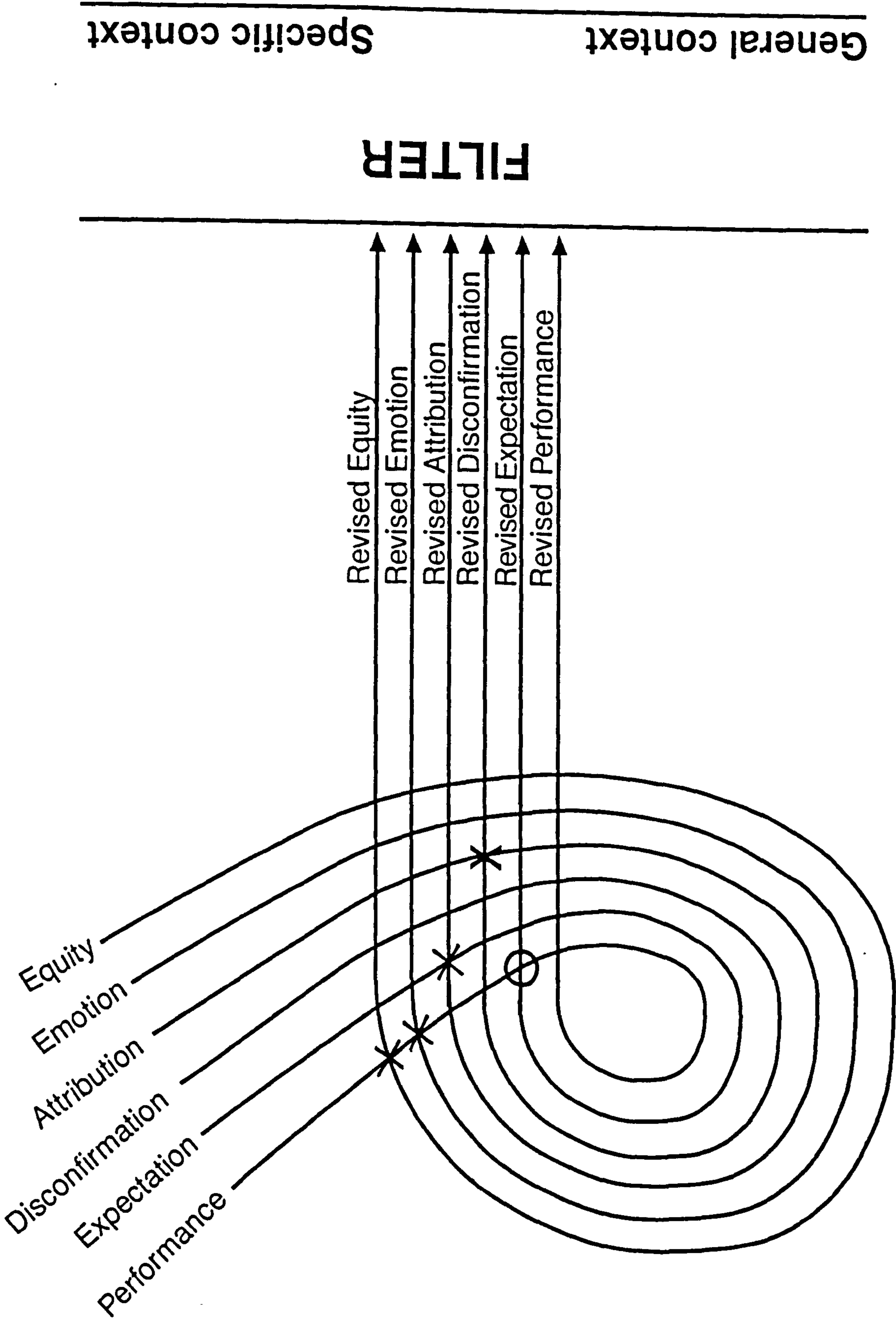


Fig 7.2 Key: X Actual interaction point O Potential but not actual interaction point

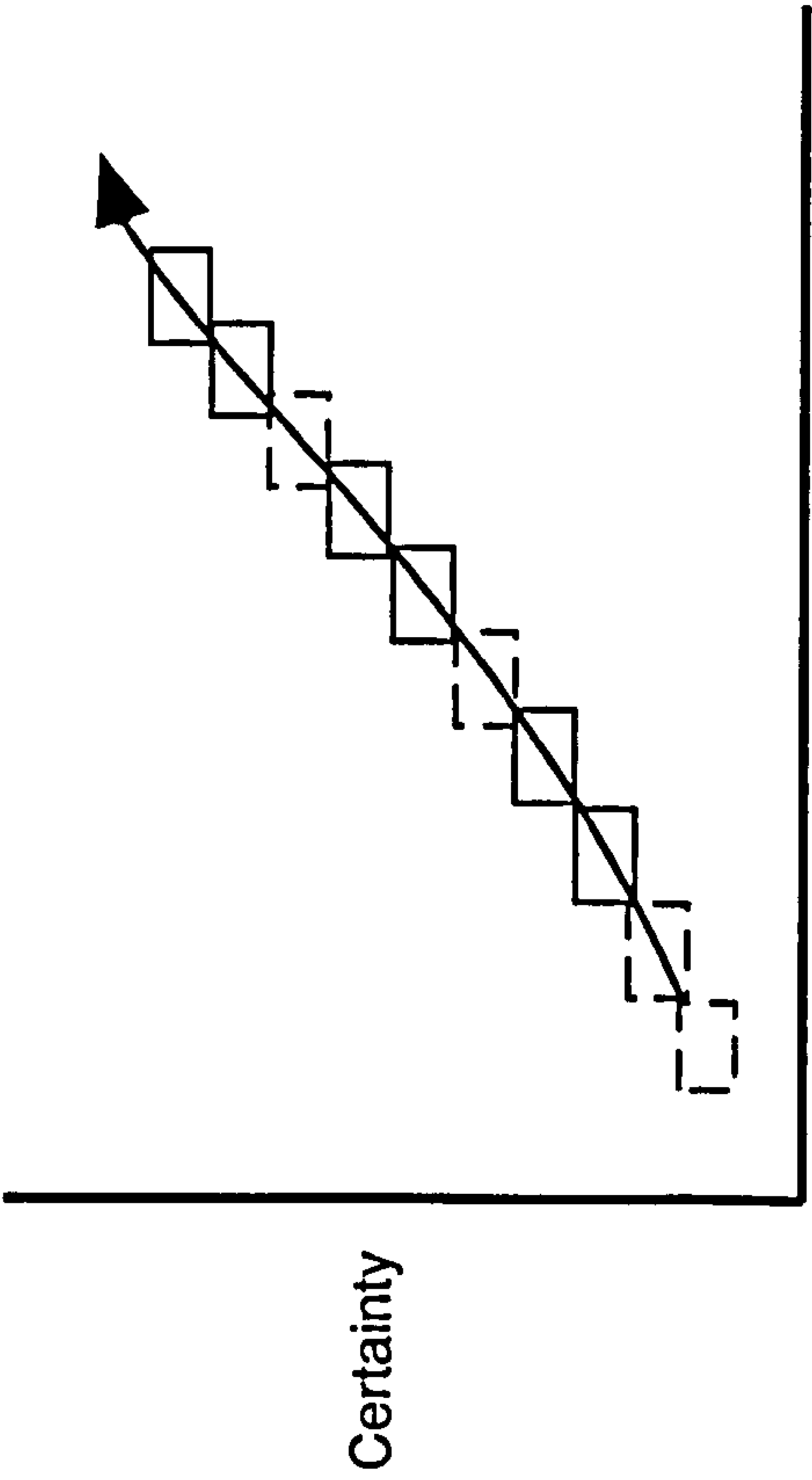


Fig 7.3.1

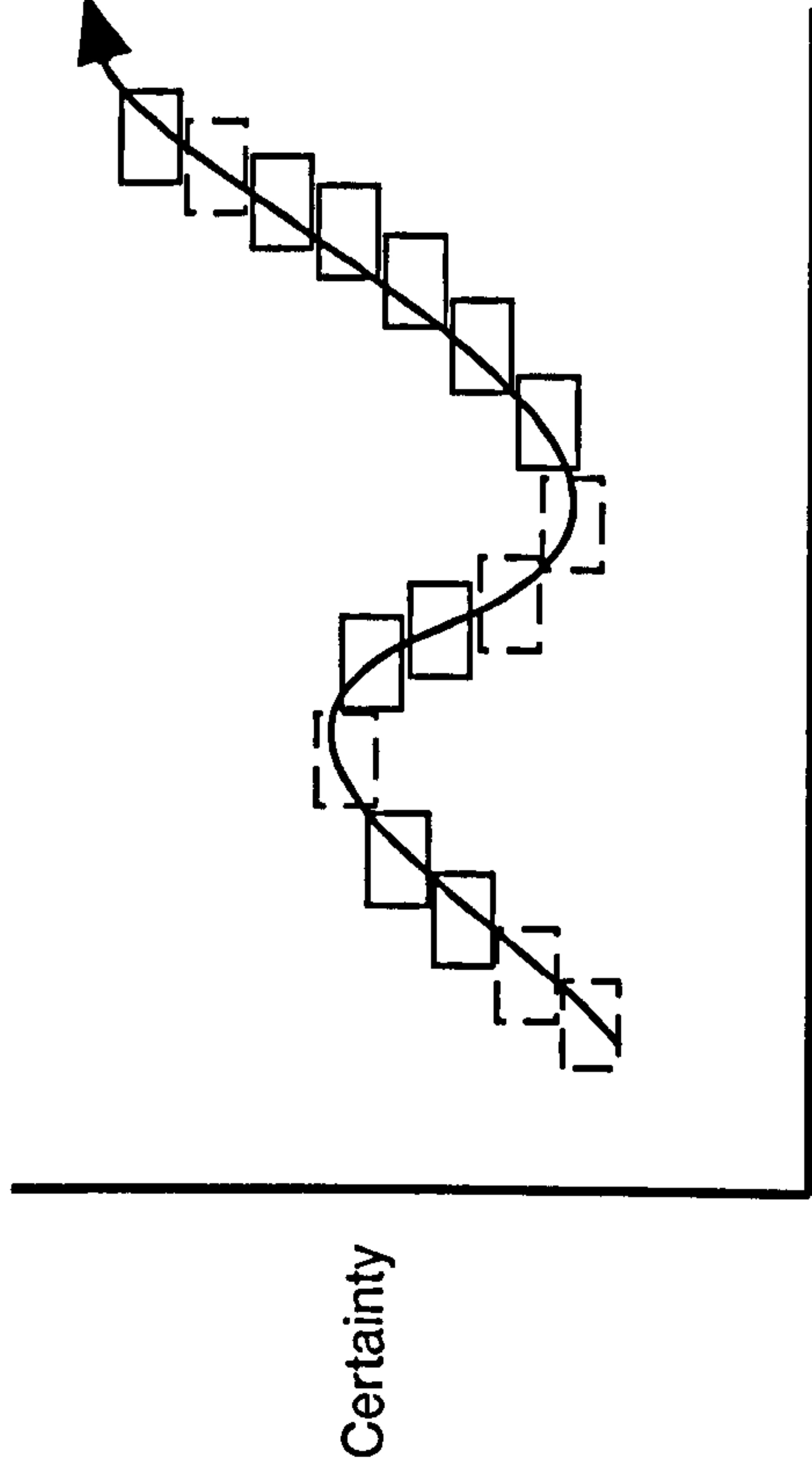


Fig 7.3.2

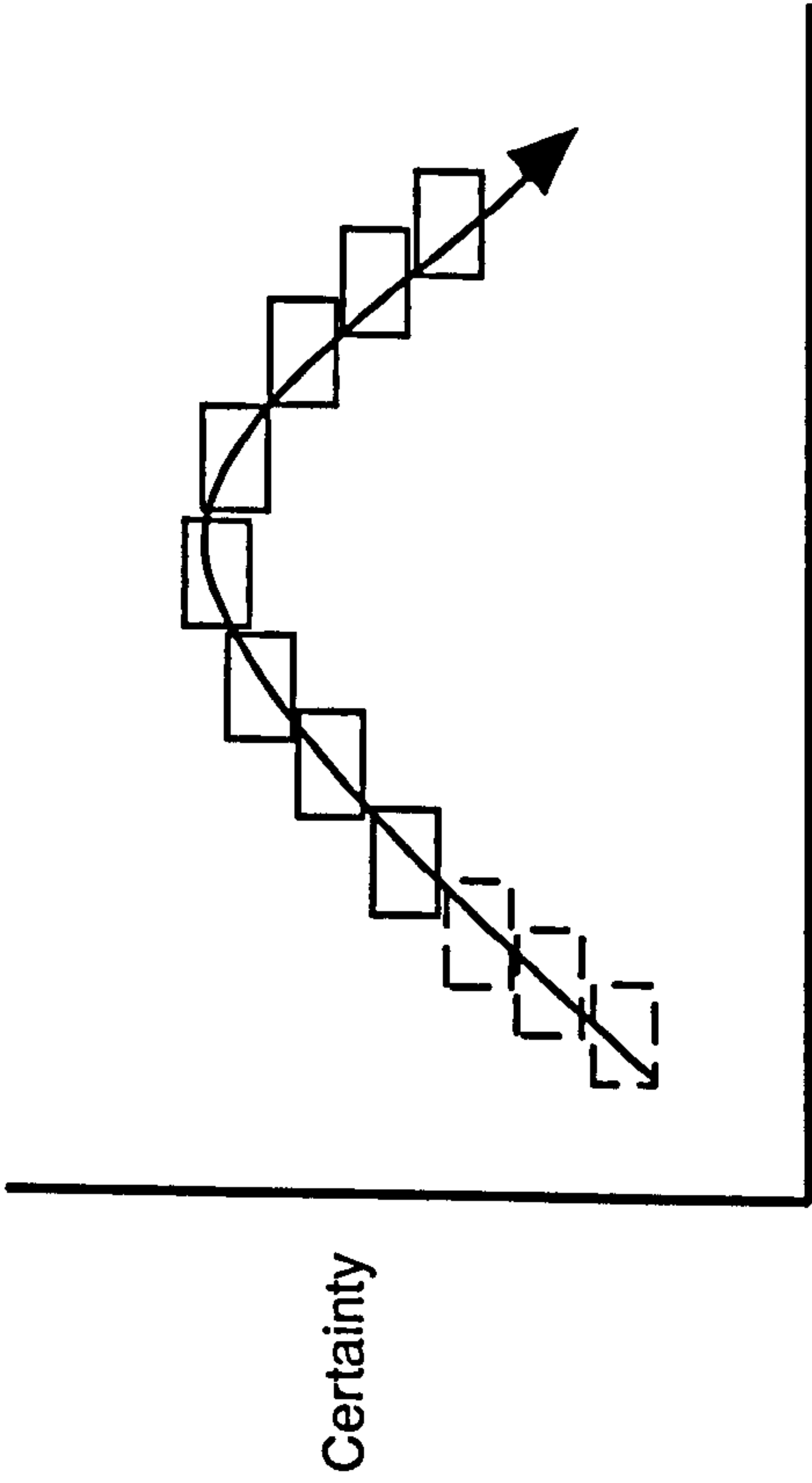


Fig 7.3.3

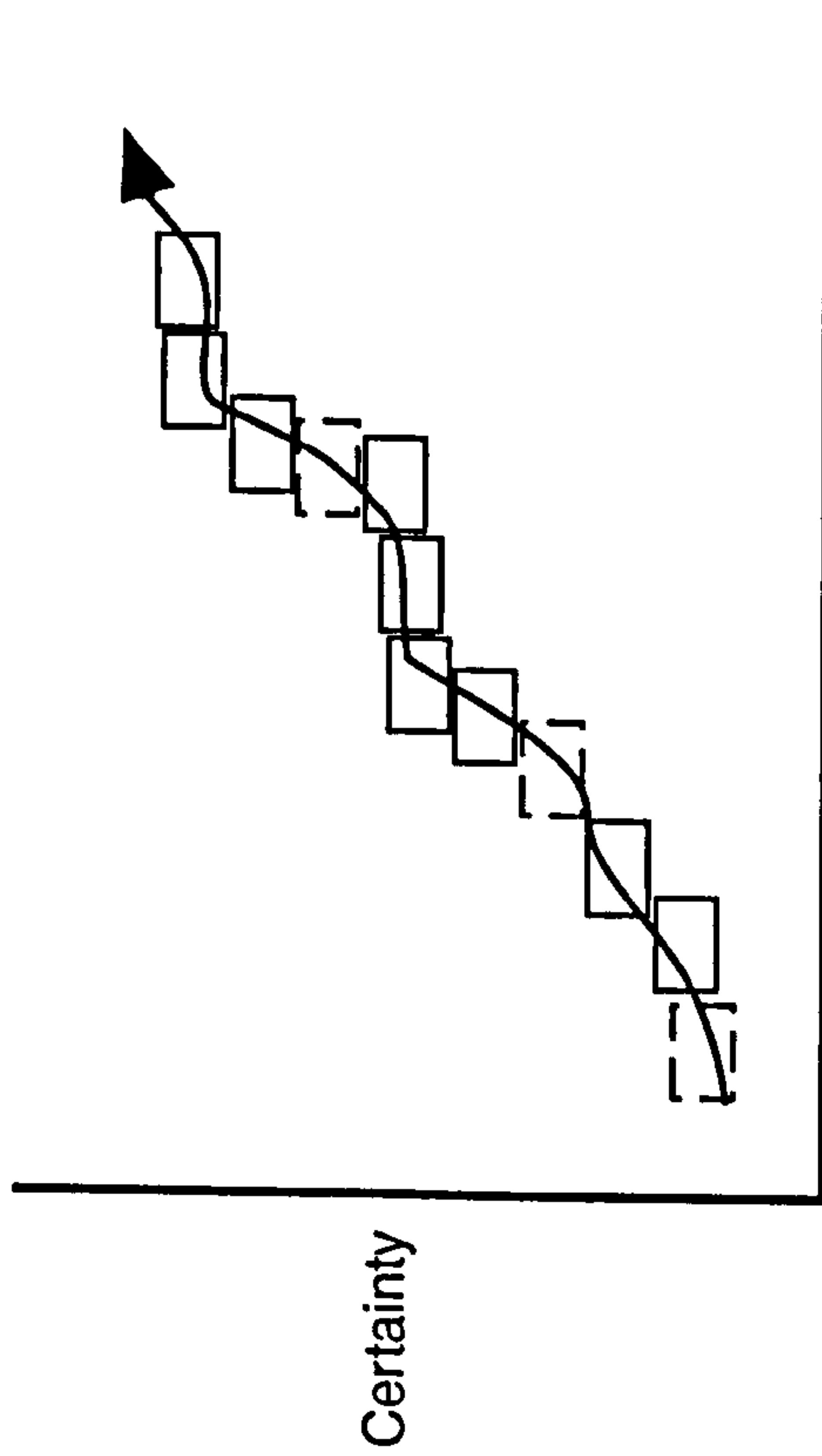


Fig 7.3.4

Fig 7.3

Key:

Micro-event — unclosed or delayed feedback

Micro-event — closed feedback

Inter-Event CS/D Development Through Time

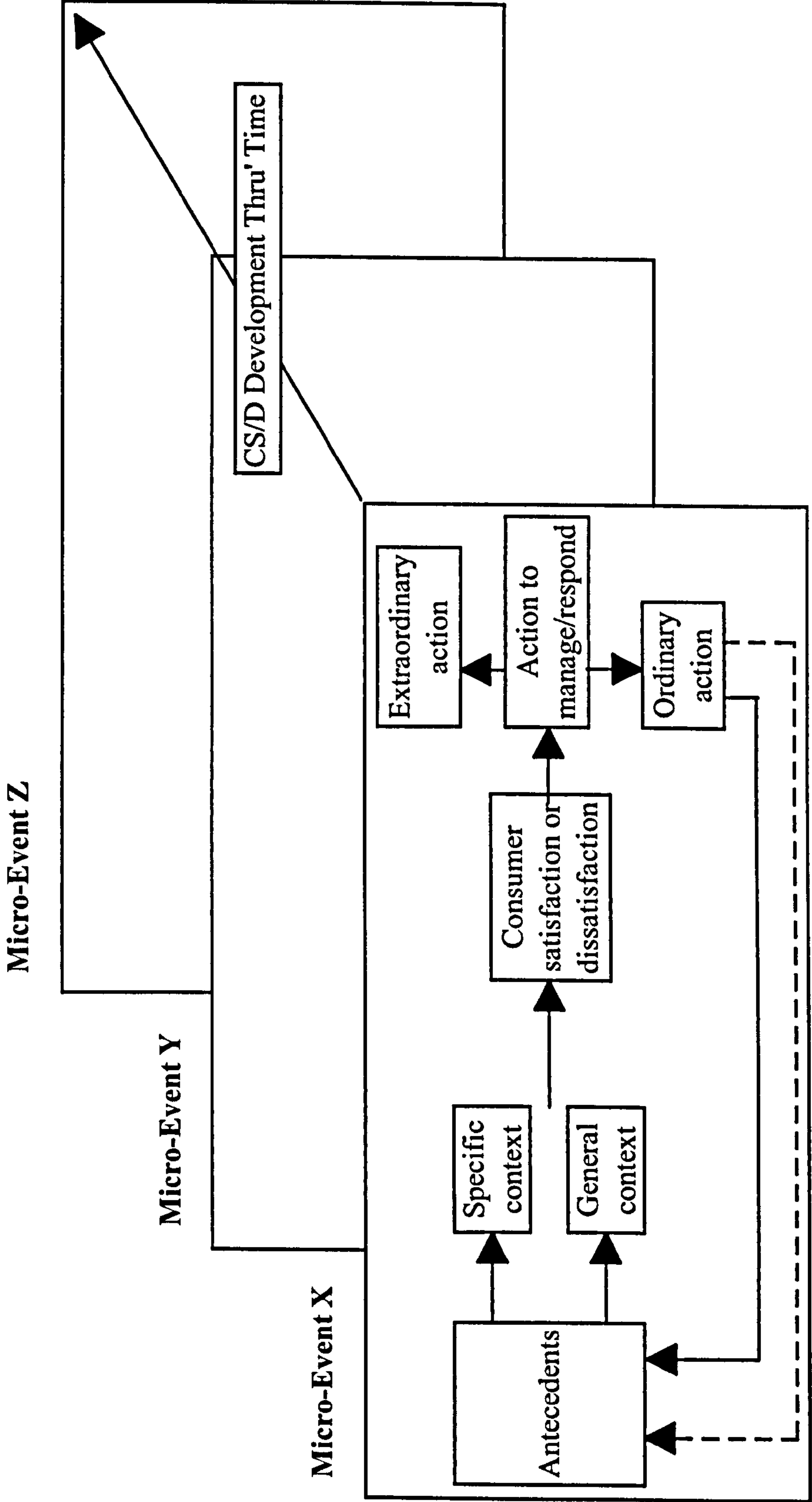


Figure 7.4

7.1 Interpretation framework

The framework for the interpretation is at one and the same time both familiar and unfamiliar - as befits an interpretation. A diagrammatic presentation of the framework demonstrates that the interpretation is rooted in the terminology, description and analysis of the previous chapters whilst offering an overall synthesis with new stated relationships (fig. 7.1). It attempts to capture the complexity of reality - as represented by the participant observation and to some extent the management interviews - whilst recognising that such an attempt is bound never to entirely succeed.

In essence, an interpretation of the various research sources confirms that it is possible to recognise a range of causal conditions or antecedents that affect consumer satisfaction associated with long-haul tours - expectation, performance, disconfirmation, attribution, emotion and equity - which act independently or in combination and with varying influence dependent on their properties and dimensions. These are reviewed and interpreted below in some detail but at this point the key consideration within the interpretation framework apart from the *recognition* of the antecedents is the conception that the antecedents interact in the form of a *vortex* of dynamic inter-relationships. So, performance interacts with expectation - when present and remembered - and with each of the other antecedents. However, there is no *invariable* interaction. In fig. 7.2 there are *actual interaction points* and *potential but not actual interaction points*. Tour operator management showed a tentative understanding of such interaction - particularly with reference to expectation, performance and disconfirmation - but the strength of such a vortex was observed most obviously within the *participant observation*. With the passage of each *moment* and *period*, represented by an *event*, interaction potentially modifies the antecedents so that the vortex of interactions contributes to the alteration of the subsequent antecedent form. This leads to revised performance, expectation and so forth.

The antecedents are then filtered through both a *specific context* and a more broad and *general context*.

The specific context is generally flexible and relates to a situational context that is particular to the tour under consideration. This includes details on the destination, tour itinerary and tour operator or ground operator. It also includes details on people - such as the individual tourist, other tourists in the group, the tour leader, other consumer service personnel both in the destination and source area and the host population.

The broad and general context is rather more fixed and may not be particular to the situation. This relates primarily to the characteristics of service industries, tourism, tour operation and long-haul tourism. It is suggested that not all of these would exert equal influence from tour to tour.

The process whereby the antecedents are filtered through the specific and general contexts leads to the development of *within tour CS/D* among the consumers. Consumers thread the various modified (or unmodified) antecedents through the specific and general contexts and so come to either an immediate or delayed within tour CS/D judgement about a micro-event. It is particularly at the start of a tour experience that delayed CS/D judgements occur.

Within tour CS/D precedes *action (or inaction)* that responds or does not respond to the CS/D. The action may be either *ordinary*, most probably short term and confined to the consumer, other consumers, the tour leader, consumer service personnel and (potentially) the host population or *extraordinary*, possibly short term but most probably also long term - involving the ground handler direct and/or the tour operator.

Action or inaction leads to a positive or negative modification or stultification of CS/D.

In some examples a *feedback loop* occurs whereby one *micro event of CS/D*, modified or otherwise by the ordinary or extra-ordinary actions, then influences the antecedents of a further event. The micro-event is then closed. In other instances, again particularly at the start of a tour experience, a feedback loop may be delayed and so a micro-event remains unclosed. Such non-closure is reduced through time and appears rare in the longer term. However, each micro event and completed or part completed loop contributes to a *time-certainty CS/D curve* (fig. 7.3).

There may be specific *climaxes* during which the consumer is forced to confront the CS/D equation - for example, following positive or negative memorable moments; or periods close to or on return to normal life; or at the behest of management. The time-certainty curve develops either through phases and stages within distinct temporally based sub compartments and compartments or through a more erratic and non progressive flux. So, the tourist experience is filled with micro-events (fig. 7.4). *Certainty* is important because of its probable influence on future decisions and because in positive instances it generates positive advocacy. Perhaps paradoxically, but

nevertheless fortunately for management, consumers tend to avoid negative self-presentation - negative certainty which reflects negatively on the consumer tends to be much less vehemently portrayed.

CS/D evolves through time not just because of forced confrontation but also because the tourism consumer *purposefully strives* toward the attainment of CS/D during the consumption/production process. The rate of formation, shape and direction of the time-certainty curve will not be fixed but a point is reached at which some form of *final* reflection on CS/D is attained.

Throughout this interpretation it will be necessary to refer to the interpretation framework - effectively a within tour CS/D process model (fig. 7.1) - which provides the structure for the chapter; the CS/D antecedent vortex (fig. 7.2); the time certainty model (fig. 7.3) and the conceptualisation of inter-event CS/D development through time (fig. 7.4).

7.2 Antecedents and CS/D

7.2.1 Expectancy disconfirmation - standards, appraisal and comparison

7.2.2 Expectancy disconfirmation - brands, memories, learning bias, learning and management control.

7.2.3 Performance within expectancy disconfirmation - the key antecedent

7.2.4 Attribution

7.2.5 Emotion

7.2.6 Equity

The first component within the interpretation framework is a consideration of the existence and interaction of the CS/D antecedents.

The *management interviewees* suggested both directly and indirectly that the antecedents of consumer satisfaction recognised in the literature were recognisable and capable of application within the reality of long-haul tourism - either independently or in conjunction with one another. This was confirmed by the *participant observation*.

7.2.1 Expectancy disconfirmation - standards, appraisal and comparison.

With regard to *standards* - the start point of much discussion on CS/D - it seemed that the central suggestion of Miller (1977) on consumer expectations was broadly in line with the way that both management and consumers thought about consumer expectations. Miller had advocated that there were actually a *range of standards* from the 'ideal' through to 'deserved', 'expected' and 'lowest tolerable' - comparable in approach to the service quality literature and the Parasuraman (1995) division between 'desired' (normative) and 'adequate' (predictive) service expectations set within a zone of tolerance. Management showed signs of pushing consumers towards a position of 'ideal' / 'deserved' expectations whilst at the same time laying down an ultimate fall-back position of the 'lowest tolerable' expectation. Meanwhile, consumers were prepared to raise their expectations towards the 'ideal' whilst at the same time being sufficiently aware that other levels of expectation, say, most probably, 'deserved' / 'expected' might be more appropriate.

The *appraisal and comparison* process in turn was also recognised by managers and consumers within the primary research in similar terms to that outlined in the literature - the expectancy disconfirmation relationship was the clearest relationship assumed by both the management and the consumers. However, management was not truly aware of the *process* of expectancy disconfirmation within CS/D and in particular the *time delay* that often occurred as consumers sought to rationalise the discrepancy that existed between outcomes and evaluation standards during appraisal and comparison. Perhaps the term 'rationalise' is too directive - the reality during the participant observation was that consumers frequently appeared to let the evaluation process *drift* from one set of events through and beyond another. There was no *rush* to conclude or even to make interim conclusions. The reasoning behind this was sometimes intuitively defensive - almost as if a judgement, even a partial judgement, was not a positive approach within the over-riding drive toward the final desired level of CS. This level was necessarily as high within a flexible scale as possible - partly because it reflected on personal performance and perhaps partly because it reflected on a compliance to public pressure to say that CS was high. This was a status reward - although the chosen participant observation method of primary research placed the researcher close to more private opinion, too, which also showed a drive toward high level CS.

Perhaps herein lay a part understanding of the clearly recognisable *cognitive dissonance* within consumer behaviour - early on in the participant observation

consumers sought to justify and re-justify the decision to undertake the tour in question and there were many other similar examples on a daily basis as the tour developed. For example, the 'tame' character of the tour as perceived by some consumers was balanced against the loss of time that is inherent in more independent travel. On the other hand, there *were* examples of other reactions - for example, *contrast theory*. However, such reactions were less freely asserted than the approach of cognitive dissonance - sometimes only emerging in the post tour consumer interviews and even sometimes then at second hand from close companions and not from the principal consumer. This in turn conflicts with the sometimes more sceptical view of the management with regard to consumers - examples have been detailed of managers who considered that the consumer frequently sought to emphasise differences between outcomes and evaluation standards in a post-tour push toward monetary compensation. The recognition of such a process would necessarily have seemed to entail the working of contrast theory. However, a more balanced viewpoint from management pointed towards consumers as both assimilating some differences between outcomes and evaluation standards and contrasting others. *However, taken within the broad sweep of experience from the participant observation and the consumer interviews the researcher is inclined to suggest that the consumer, whilst by no means naive and gullible, was nevertheless predisposed towards a favourable evaluation of outcomes against evaluation standards and sought more toward the harmony of Festinger (1962) and Oliver (1977) than any other position.* This predisposition lay the foundation for a favourable report on CS/D and also for a positive relationship between expectancy disconfirmation and the other antecedents. The other antecedents were hardly the hand-servants of expectancy disconfirmation - with or without performance at its core - but were sometimes employed in a positive confirmatory role.

7.2.2 Expectancy disconfirmation - brands, memories, learning bias, learning and management control.

Expectancy disconfirmation was also viewed in the academic literature as imposed on by *brands* as comparison standards (Woodruffe, Cadotte and Jenkins (1983)). However, the *surprisingly high extent* of such use by the long-haul consumers in the participant observation was *not* identified by the management interviewees despite the easy opportunity to do so in CSQs. The consumers based their expectations on product-based norms and made comparisons with other similar brands. These comparisons were made with *unanticipated frequency* - comparisons with other product types competing for the same need or want were less frequent. From this point

of view long-haul tourism appeared to have reached a notable degree of maturity within a relatively short period of time as a consumer product. Practically, the comparisons across brands afforded good opportunity for consumer satisfaction (or dis-satisfaction).

Memories, too, also shone through within consumer conversation related to expectancy disconfirmation. These were often in line with the drawing out and retrieval of memories suggested by Mazursky (1989). For the most part this drawing out was related to other tourism experiences but within the participant observation there was also evidence to suggest that the wider memories of life experiences were also instrumental in the drawing out process - tourism was not such a distinct and special activity that it was in some sense isolated from other non-tourism experience. So, whilst Jon within the participant observation was surprised to note the Muslim character of Malaysia - something that he did not expect - he was able to relate the comparatively restrained outward interpretation of the Muslim ways to negative job and life experiences in more fundamentalist Muslim nations and so make positive statements about Malaysia. *This had a positive effect on CS/D.*

The possibility of *bias* in the learning experience - neatly encapsulated in the phrase 'the illusion of control' (Langer (1975 : 311)) also emerged from the primary research. The management interviewees sometimes suggested that consumers were prone to be selective about their learning from the brochures and other information sources prior to the tour. However, the management did not truly comment on the important continuation of selective learning throughout the tourism performance. However, there were many powerful demonstrations of learning bias from self-directed learning within the participant observation - often compounded through discussion. Moreover, the vivid immediacy and growing potency of personal experience was thought to contribute toward the early withdrawal of judgement on CS/D during the tour and the development of more trenchant views towards the denouement of the experience.

It was possible to identify the partitioning of the learning experience along theoretical grounds (Hoch and Deighton (1989)) - hypothesis, exposure, encoding and integration - even though there was a late surge of encoding and integration. Perhaps such conformity to theory might contain a consolation for management faced with bias, diverse memories and broad brand comparisons among consumers - although perception (influenced by bias and so forth) must be the key to consumer behaviour rather than some other arbitrary truth. This was not at all like a neat, comfortable and pure academic interpretation of expectancy disconfirmation.

On the other hand, during the participant observation tour there was evidence that management missed opportunities to *control* the learning experience. Such neglect needed to be addressed even if this created a heightened sense of authority - which management was in some instances reluctant to introduce both for practical reasons and for reasons connected with the ethos of the tour operator.

However, management did not seem to be just concerned with control through the marketing of top-down images designed to tempt the consumer. The management interviewees themselves highlighted the supposedly more practical advice that was offered within brochures and through direct contact at consumer evenings and on the telephone. But reality was removed from the theory and a case could be suggested - from the evidence of the participant observation - that management was lulled into assuming that consumers in the long-haul market were not familiar with the domain and still worked in an ambiguous environment. Almost certainly this was no longer the case or was changing rapidly with the result that consumer expectations were not so naive and fallible, performance was more confident and disconfirmations were more balanced.

7.2.3 Performance within expectancy disconfirmation - the key antecedent

There are numerous examples of the central position of performance within the participant observation. From these and the other more muted comments of management, the researcher would strongly argue that the *performance* and the associated *involvement* above all others of the individual consumer but also the performance of other consumers, the tour leader, other consumer service personnel and just occasionally the host population exerts a *dominant* role within the expectancy disconfirmation paradigm and the wider paradigm that embraces all of the antecedents. By inference, the *performance* of the individual consumer is of more importance than the *expectations* of the individual consumer in the creation of CS/D. Accordingly, the vortex model should truly be interpreted with an emphasis on the performance antecedent as *the* driver antecedent to which the other antecedents have a more subordinate rather than equal role.

In the participant observation *expectations* were sometimes distant - except perhaps for some perceived key events such as the visit to the Taman Negara rainforest

although even in this instance *detailed* expectations were rare and the consumer was rather more taken over by the flow of activity.

There was a crucial link for the *individual consumer* between *performance* and *positive self-enhancement, self-protection and self-presentation* to others. This was observable throughout the participant observation although one particularly clear example was in the rainforest. Much of the stated satisfaction with this element of the tour stemmed from the consumer motivation to counter the high perceived requirements of physical and mental ability, effort, task difficulty and even luck that were associated with the rainforest experience. Success with regard to this experience was vital - this was the core phase of expectancy disconfirmation and within that performance and also the key trial of potential positive attribution to self. Perhaps it should not be a surprise that even Frank and Kate spoke so clearly about 'survival in the jungle' - and amiably confessed in the post tour interview to speak without ambivalence to their friends about such survival '... although we really know that it was not exactly so difficult as we make out'.

Perhaps, of all the other *people* performances apart from the individual consumer, that of the *tour leader* was the most important. Again, within the participant observation, the frequent description and analysis of the thoughts, actions and even feelings of Asif, the EM tour leader, by the researcher and the other consumers, remains as a witness to the tour leader role in the performance antecedent - and eventually, therefore, in the formation of micro event CS/D and overall CS/D. The constant tension faced by Asif with regard to the logistics of the tour and his consequent, even rationally argued, downgrading of elements related to social psychology - a downgrading also in part caused by the strain of emotional labour - negatively affected his performance in the view of some consumers. This is detailed in the narrative - together with the effect on CS/D. Tour leader performance indeed ran as a strong current throughout the period of participant observation research - and contributed in no small measure to its central role among the antecedents.

The importance of the role of the other *tour group members* also added to the performance current. Other tourists within the EM tour group on the participant observation were not just a static element of the context. They performed and, therefore, affected overall performance of the group - implicit recognition of this was gleaned from the importance attached to the identification of fellow tour group members at the airports in London and KL. Explicit recognition emerged from

multifarious observations of, say, conscious efforts to develop group togetherness - and also conversations about group development.

Such observations and interpretations have an echo in the work of Dunn Ross and Iso-Ahola (1991 : 227-228) who commented on the tourists *escape* from the everyday environment, personal and interpersonal world and the simultaneous attempt to *seek* intrinsic rewards from participation in leisure activities:

'The intrinsic rewards that the individual may pursue through leisure can also be divided into personal and interpersonal. The personal rewards consist mainly of self-determination, sense of competence, challenge, learning, exploration and relaxation. On the other hand, people often want to engage in leisure activities mainly for social contact.'

7.2.4 Attribution

The suggestion of Oliver (1989) that expectancy disconfirmation could be viewed as an *instigator* of attribution processing certainly found expression within the management interviews and the participant observation. It was also possible to recognise the expression of other theoretical considerations - such as those of Kelley and Michela (1980) on the *antecedents of causal inferences*, Weiner (1985), Folkes et al (1987) and Folkes (1988) on *locus, stability and control* - even though the exact workings of these were sometimes different from the pre-conceived view of the researcher and the limited field examples available in the literature.

For example, with regard to *information* as an antecedent causal inference there was a far reduced reliance than originally conceived on the notion of *salience*. This did not just apply with reference to the tour leader and the attempt by almost every consumer through time to balance and equate the true locus of negative attributions between the tour leader and the ground handler. It also applied to negative events of more short term duration such as the appalling state of hygiene in the restroom of one Chinese owned restaurant. Here, attribution was levelled at the general cultural way rather than the restaurant owners per se. Likewise, too, the notion of *primacy* was not so powerful as originally conceived. Kate stated in jest, at the end of a post tour consumer interview, that she and Frank had made a negative and permanent attribution for disorganisation on Asif within the first hour of the tour - but this was not confirmed elsewhere in the interview. Rather, they had done as much or more balancing and equating as the other consumers.

Perhaps, the information assimilation process was truly assisted by the depth of *prior beliefs* - the second theoretical causal inference. Indeed, in the restaurant example above, it could be argued that a causal schemata was at work that linked the unhygienic observations with a cultural stereotype of low hygiene standards. *Here the beliefs interpreted the events.* The familiarity of most of the consumers with other cultures and long-haul travel could certainly seem to support the enhanced role of prior beliefs. Schemata existed for most events on the tour - with the probable exception of the rainforest.

Of course, it was in the rainforest that the third theoretical antecedent causal inference - consumer *motivation* and particularly esteem or hedonic motivation - happened to be most apparent.

Most of the management interviewees were clearly aware of the premium that was placed on such heightened phases of consumption and production by the consumers with the consequent effect on CS/D. *In the opinion of the researcher, based on the participant observation, consumer satisfaction regarding the positive attribution of self in the positive balance of outcomes against comparison standards was vital for CS/D - both specific to the event and overall.* The antecedent causal inference of self motivation on attribution was indeed of especial significance.

With regard to *locus, stability, control* and attribution the theory once again found expression both in the management interviews and in the participant observation. There were some weary comments from the management interviewees about an invariably incorrect attribution of blame to the tour operator. However, this contrasted with an alternative management view that cast the consumers in a more *discriminatory mode* and the tour operators as more *pro-active and aware* of the possible means of blame amelioration. For example, in the participant observation the consumers showed a considerable degree of both *discrimination*, whether correct or otherwise, and *delay* in attribution with regard to the perceived locus, stability and control of the tour leader vis-a-vis the ground handler and the tour operator. Contrary to suggestions in the literature and also contrary to the directly expressed suggestion of the tour leader on the EM tour, consumers did not *too* readily identify the tour leader employee as personally responsible for negative events. This was compounded, too, by what sometimes seemed to be an intuitive avoidance, on the part of the tour leader, of negative attribution. However, in the one event that caused the greatest degree of conversation and which affected the greatest number of tourists - the dangerous flat rocks that caused so many cuts and lacerations whilst swimming on the ebb tide at

Paya Beach, Tioman Island - there was a clear locus of blame suggested by the consumers onto the tour leader and to a lesser extent the owner of the Paya Beach; and a *clear* sense that the cause was both stable and subject to volitional control so that the consumers should have been alerted to the dangers by a tour leader with such considerable experience of the island. The tour leader was also the *immediate* focus of blame - there was no dithering. This was sustained both during and beyond the tour - shown in the consumer interviews - despite resistance from the tour leader who firmly transferred the locus of the blame to the consumers. Perhaps there was never more than a limited likelihood for the tour leader to make a successful transference of blame - consumers would take a considerable blow to their self aggrandisement and belief in themselves as consumer-producers if they were to admit that even a 'tropical paradise' caused them dissatisfaction of their own making. *Attribution of blame to self in such a situation would cause an even greater negative effect on consumer satisfaction than attribution to another party.*

Other consequences stemmed from the resultant consumer dissatisfaction. The consumer interviews showed that several consumers used the Paya Beach as one central element in complaint and beyond that in an attempt to gain an apology and a refund - there was indeed an anger reaction and a market-place equity reaction. None of these attempts was successful and so there was a resolve not to consider repeat purchase with the tour operator - and, also, to discourage such purchase among friends and acquaintances.

So, there were clearly stated links between attribution (whether correct or not), CS/D, complaining behaviour, redress and potential repurchase. However, some management interviewees without close contact to staff dealing with consumer complaints had not only tended to view complaints as wearisome but also underplayed the links as inevitable - even though the linkage could have been broken.

7.2.5 Emotion

It has already been established that the thoughts of management on consumer emotions were rather more limited than on antecedents such as expectation and performance (or combined expectancy disconfirmation) and attribution. Yet, there were clear examples of the role of emotions within the participant observation - and not just the limited emotional categories focussed on by the management interviewees (excitement and fear) but the fuller range of categories of a *positive, negative or neutral* character considered by Izard (1977) and Plutchik (1980). Long-haul tourism was increasingly perceived as very much intrinsically motivated with a drive toward self-performance and presentation that was more hedonic, intangible and subjective than ordinary life even for the most experienced consumer. *Each of these observations signposted the likelihood that emotions had a distinct role within the CS/D antecedent vortex - and vortex that involved the joint or separate effect of the expectation, performance, disconfirmation triumvirate together on occasion with attribution.*

So, for example, the participant observation consistently revealed the positive emotional category of 'interest'; the supposedly negative category of 'fear' - that in many but not all aspects was customised within the tour framework so that it shed its raw edge and was almost transformed into a positive category; and the neutral category of 'surprise' - preferably a positive surprise. These categories defined the expectancy disconfirmation or various components of the expectancy disconfirmation so much so that even largely automatic 'primary affects' (Oliver 1989) were remembered by consumers after the event during the consumer interviews and made a contribution to CS/D.

Without doubt, the '*distinct emotions*' of Oliver were also remembered and again the Paya Beach example served to illustrate that such a distinct emotion as 'anger' might interact with the decided locus, stability and controllability of an attribution and have a notably adhesive effect on CS/D. Indeed, much evidence suggested that the antecedent negative emotional state created by anger was a key component of a decision to complain - whether within the tour or post-tour.

Emotions and attribution also interacted when the focus of the attribution was on the individual consumer rather than on, say, the product or the seller in the guise of the tour leader, ground handler or tour operator. *Moreover, consistent with the emergent theme which has tracked the centrality of consumer performance, the emotional category of guilt also proved to be an adhesive component - despite the outward*

imperative of positive presentation - when the consumer felt some guilt concerning their input into the consumption process. However, there was a temporal delay in the willingness among consumers to affirm attributions and perhaps this might initially and partially have been instrumental in the repression of consumer emotions - with a consequent delay in the establishment of a settled CS/D response.

From the evidence of the management interviews vis-a-vis participant observation the emotional element in 'congenial behaviour' (Alderson 1957) such as tourism has still not been fully appreciated - apart from limited mention of emotional categories. Even with regard to the most mentioned emotional category of 'fear' the management response appeared haphazard and confined - consumers were afraid of the group composition and group relations and yet there was no specific pre-departure information on group membership or suggestions for the encouragement of group interaction. Emotions, too, could have been manipulated positively within tour - most notably by the tour leader - and yet the tour leader was utterly detached from any sort of manipulation. From conversational evidence among tour members this situation was commonplace - the one detailed description from management on tour leader training with regard to group dynamics and emotional awareness seemed to be the exception. Additionally, post tour manipulation was also limited - some of the consumers were not satisfied with the response or non-response to their post-tour comments and complaints.

Accordingly, it might be argued that the distance between the suggestions of the theorists and the reality of management knowledge and understanding of consumer emotions has a notable effect on consumer satisfaction.

On the EM tour, too, this was compounded by the tour leader who, in contemporary phraseology, was not in touch with his emotions. His fear of rejection impinged on satisfaction - it led to a freezing of innovation as observed (and experienced) on a number of occasions such as the monotonous passage of travel along the east coast of Malaysia.

7.2.6. Equity

The antecedent of equity was accorded some attention by management and a range of management initiatives could be viewed as an attempt to develop a sense of equity among the consumers (see 5.6). So, consumers were sometimes screened and advised about the non-suitability of a tour because of the perceived effect of incongruent segmentation - although the drive for profitability sometimes countered such a concern. The gamut of issues raised concerning the ethics of tourism and their effect on consumers - for example, perceived concerns with the social or physical environment - were also introduced by management during the interviews although it always seemed that these concerns were an appendage to concerns about expectation and performance.

For their part the consumers also showed that equity was a consideration in the development of CS/D - on reflection, a rather important part, too. As an illustration equity helped to create particular satisfaction for some consumers who had incorrectly expected that the accommodation at an experience such as in Taman Negara would be denied to others on economic grounds. The overturning of expectation in this instance was recounted with much pleasure and solicited many other reminiscences and comparisons of either equity or inequity during previous tourism experience. In the terms of the vortex, a sense of equity interacted with and revised expectations and performance.

A sense of equity also contributed to the favourable performance of both individuals and the group during the most memorable of experiences - on the rainforest trail. The equitable inputs of each individual to help other members of the group to deal with the physical demands of the trail created a group cohesiveness which allowed all the group members to benefit in terms of the performance output.

On reflection, other examples also existed within the EM tour - equity as an antecedent of satisfaction was both evident and fitted within the vortex concept.

PAGE
NUMBERING
AS ORIGINAL

7.3 Vortex of CS/D antecedents.

From a consideration of each of these antecedents it becomes apparent that each may act either *independently* or *interdependently* within a schema represented by the vortex model (fig. 7.2). In general, however, *performance* and especially *people performance* is crucial.

As with all the interpretation related to the recognition of the CS/D antecedents and the vortex schema there are innumerable good confirmatory examples contained in either or both the management interviews and the participant observation (and subsequent consumer interviews). In Taman Negara, for example, during the rainforest walk, individual performance and a sense of achievement - as the walk progressed and each viewpoint was reached and difficulty overcome - was a notable determinant in the curt but meaningful end of walk comments. *This was despite the raised and remembered long-term expectations, close to ideal expectations, too, and the shorter term expectations derived in situ from the first close sight of the rainforest at Tembeling, the river journey, the first visit to the hide at Kuala Tehan and general conversation with the tour leader.* The influence of individual performance meanwhile was added to by other components of the people performance - the 'gel' within the group (often mentioned by management) and the sense of equity that drove the group members to encourage and actively help each other up and down steep embankments and so forth along the trail. Emotions also interconnected with the performance - initially fear but other emotions, too, as the trail progressed. However, running strongly through all the interconnected antecedents was the performance antecedent. Observations and conversations, both on the walk and with due reflection placed this at the core of the antecedents - although other antecedents were also important and the whole experience was set within and influenced by both a very specific context and a more stable general context.

The initial conceptualisation of the vortex of antecedents was first generated on the road to Tembeling and the rainforest - it was suggested by and appeared to work in less extreme circumstance than the rainforest. But the Taman Negara experience and there, specifically, the experience on the rainforest trail, began to lend credence to the conceptualisation. Numerous other examples followed that may be drawn out from the narrative description and analysis.

Of course, as represented in the vortex model, there is no *invariable* interaction of the antecedents. The narrative suggests, for example, that Robbi arrived on the EM tour by default, with fewer expectations (even forgotten expectations) than the other members. Other instances of such *non-interaction* are also evident in the narrative. So within the vortex there will be some *actual interaction points* and other *potential but not actual interaction points*.

Nor is performance *invariably* at the core of the vortex. Within one micro event of CS/D, or a series of micro events, another antecedent may temporarily accede to dominance. Even so, the conceptualisation of a vortex of CS/D antecedents with performance at the core seems to be invaluable in the understanding of CS/D.

7.4 Context

Each of the antecedents, after interaction with the other antecedents within the vortex is next filtered through both the specific context and the more broad and general context.

Perhaps it is in the interpretation of the antecedents in relation to context that the generality of the findings from the primary research might be most vulnerable to criticism - except that there has never been an attempt to claim any more or less than *analytic generalisation* rather than *statistical generalisation*. From one perspective it could be argued, although there are strong counter arguments, that the interpretation is overly predicated by the context. However, there is not any evidence or suggestion from the experience of the primary research that context is not important - *antecedents do not exist in a vacuum*. Accordingly, the research must accept that there are shifting contexts from one long-haul tour, tour operator and so on to another.

7.4.1 Specific context

specific itinerary

Evidence in the participant observation that the consumers did indeed make judgements of CS/D with regard to the specific context of the itinerary might be recalled from the neutral consumer reaction to inadequate product attributes such as the hotel in Jerantut - as well as many other examples. On the side of the supplier, too, the specific context of the itinerary might also affect the perception of what a tour leader, say, may feel can be offered in terms of CS/D. This may be conveyed to the

consumer either indirectly or directly - directly in the case of the participant observation.

It is agreed that the *specific itinerary* of the participant observation tour might have affected the specific unravelling of the antecedents. However, on the other hand, there was considerable comment and comparison throughout by the participants concerning their other extensive long-haul experience - and so from this evidence it was possible to gauge and make some assurances about the typicality of the specific tour. Accordingly, for example, it became apparent that the delay in early judgement regarding discrepancies between outcomes and evaluation standards was entirely typical within other specific contexts. A similar conclusion was reached with regard to a range of other findings.

Of course, this is not to discount the possibility that a change in the specific timing of events might not have affected the development of the time-certainty model so that a range of potential curves would have become feasible. So the occurrence of the Paya Beach event in the early stage of the tour might have had an effect on ongoing attributions - attributions for other events - and eventually for overall satisfaction. Likewise, a changed set of events within the Taman Negara rainforest - a negative experience - might have altered the full range of ongoing antecedents and overall satisfaction. However, the *mechanics* of the context dependent antecedent interaction and the development through the tour of a time-certainty model would not be affected by one set of specific events vis-a-vis another. It is suggested that such analytic generalisation with regard to the development of CS/D holds outside the confines of the EM tour.

Destination

Whilst the primary research interviews did not deal with one particular set of *destinations*, the participant observation was focussed, of course, on Malaysia and to a lesser extent Singapore. The reasons for this decision have already been outlined. Details of the participant observation itinerary are found in Appendix 4 and also a map highlighting locations mentioned in the description and analysis of the participant observation is provided in the text (fig.6.1). Malaysia and Singapore conformed to the trade and consumer definition and perception of a long-haul destination but on the other hand each specific long-haul destination has its own specific character which is sometimes different and sometimes similar to other long-haul destinations. So, Malaysia and Singapore were largely English speaking which is similar, say, to East

Africa but dissimilar to neighbouring Thailand. Accordingly, the opportunity for a chance conversation *in English* with a driver on another tour but from the ground operator responsible for the participant observation tour was an important element in the researcher's personal attribution of locus, stability and control with regard to the tour leader, the ground operator and the tour operator. However, it is argued that even without this conversation the researcher or other consumers would have formed some perceived conclusion with regard to attribution - there is no guarantee that the source of information from the driver was more or less reliable than other verbal or non verbal clues. Antecedents are filtered through the context - here the specific context of the destination - and react with that context. The conclusion of the consumer may or may not bear a close resemblance to objective reality. But it is consumer reality that counts.

Tour group members

The argument with regard to specificity can also be applied with reference to *tour group members* and the tour group leader. On the one hand, there was never any suggestion from the tour members that the composition of the group was notably atypical from others with which they had experience - whether with regard to demographics, socio-economics or psychographics or, indeed, aspects related to CS/D antecedents (expectations and so forth). The interaction within the group was also not atypical. Furthermore, in line with the comments of one management interviewee there seemed to be a general truth that each group had its own joker, extrovert, complainer and so forth (Jon was the joker, Robbi the extrovert, Marje the complainer (or negative critic) and Donald the most obvious positive critic). From the participant observation it is certain that the specific character of individuals affected the antecedents and so the shape of, say, the time-certainty curve. For example, the arrival of the group extrovert, Robbi, from Thailand occasioned an early appraisal of the relative passivity of the tour vis-a-vis expectations and a stated aspiration from several tour members to alter the passive-active balance of future activities - in effect to alter performance and CS/D. However, once again the *mechanics* of the context dependent antecedent interaction and the development of the time-certainty model was not altered by Robbi as a specific individual.

Tour leader

It was not possible to recognise the qualities of an ideal tour leader - as outlined by many of the management interviewees - in the EM participant observation. The inference of management was that their own tour leaders met their own stated criteria.

Poynter (1993 : 9) recognised a number of ideal qualities - '... image, an outgoing personality, a sense of humour, a strong sense of ethics, the ability to make decisions and a love of people, places and travel'. The lack of some of these on the EM tour - in degree if not in kind - certainly emphasised the effect on consumer evaluation of the tour leader and the possible influence on CS/D. This might be a harsh judgement - Reilly (1982 : 34) made the point that:

'Nobody has all the good qualities. Every tour leader is partially flawed.'

Moreover, many of the conflicts and difficulties faced by the EM tour leader were probably not entirely personal or distinctive. So, for example, support for the influence of 'nationality culture' over 'touristic culture' is found in Pizam and Jeoung (1996 : 285) - although Pizam and Sussman (1995) warn about cultural stereotyping. 'Nationality culture' created serious difficulties for the tour leader as he grappled with some sort of understanding of within tour expectations.

However, the EM tour leader managed to break the most basic of rules outlined by de Souto (1993) for tour leaders in group travel - he was not at the airport in Penang *before* the tour members. In retrospect, this negatively coloured the rest of the inter-relationship with the consumers - sometimes the negative influence was in bold relief and sometimes in neutral but it was never entirely laid to rest because further rules were broken through time. The tour leader was correct to leave the airport with a 'no-show' (a non-appearance of a tour member) - the tour leader's responsibility is to the group as a whole and not to any one individual tour member - but his late arrival at the airport and insufficient documentation cast doubt in the minds of the consumers. This was the case even though in many instances they strove to reach out and understand the pressures placed on the tour leader by the supposed inadequacy of the ground handler - a constant source of stress for the tour leader. The consumers came to understand the context sufficiently so as not to race to a negative attribution of the tour leader vis-a-vis the ground handler but a blemish continued to remain - ready for activation. So, despite mitigation from the context, there was sufficient other evidence in the context to create an effect on the consumer judgement of the tour leader - and the CS/D judgement of which it was a part.

In sum.

So each antecedent and each micro event of which it was a part passed through the various components of the specific context. This passage was both implicit and explicit in the management interviews. There were numerous examples - for instance,

comments on the emotional effect of the 'fear', 'nervousness' and 'blank darkness' caused by the uncertain itinerary or the supposed key role of the tour leader in the generation of performance. Finally, the passage was extremely clear within the participant observation - *the ongoing intra-group conversations about the role of the tour leader in the performance of the tour (with the resultant attributions) and also many of the ongoing conversations between the tour leader and individual members of the group may be interpreted as consumer attempts to thread performance and so on through the reality of the specific context.*

The effect of the antecedents was ameliorated or altered as each consumer judged the balance of expectations, performance and so forth against the specific context. This judgement was in some cases instantaneous and in other cases rather more prolonged.

7.4.2 General context

From implicit and explicit statements by management it might be interpreted that antecedents also pass through *general* contexts. The participant observation also presented many examples of this process.

Tourism as a service industry

Certainly, within the participant observation it was not possible to avoid a consideration of the working of the antecedents alongside the influence of the generic character of service industry and tourism as a special case within service industry.

The previous experience of the consumers with other long-haul tourism certainly meant that the *intangibility* element within pre-purchase was reduced. Expectations were trimmed below dreams and fantasies - something of which the management interviewees were not always aware. On the other hand, there were experiences such as those in the rainforest that most of the consumers had not previously encountered - creating heightened within tour anticipation and importance. Also, the long-haul experience remained very much a performance and an action and a performance that depended heavily in places on the co-production of the consumer - the service was *simultaneously produced and consumed*. Satisfaction with the performance was very much an *interactive* concept - and perhaps even more interactive than might have been the case in which a tour leader had moved more easily beyond an emphasis on contractual performance and towards staged performance. Here the *heterogeneous* character of the industry was emphasised. Again it was the moments and periods when

the consumers were engrossed in the performance that created the greatest satisfaction - the rainforest experience and the experiences on the day trip to the 'paradise' off-shore island beyond Tioman. The general context of the tourism experience which not only allowed but frequently encouraged such *co-production* and heterogeneity certainly had an effect on the action of the antecedents. It heightened the role of performance in the creation of CS/D - primarily, the performance of the tour leader and the consumers. It also supported the attachment of positive experiences on to the consumers themselves - there was less ambiguity in such attachment than had previously been foreseen.

The inter-dependence of the tourism sectors was a further characteristic that dominated the view of consumer satisfaction held by the tour leader - and, consequently, dominated the experience that he sought to provide with a constant attempt to smooth the interlinkage between the sectoral elements of accommodation, transport and so forth. Management interviewees also placed an emphasis on this element. However, such an emphasis on logistics was not so immediately and obviously stressed with regard to its importance by the consumers - an inclusive tour was supposed after all to reduce consumer involvement with this aspect of production. Logistics only came to the fore in conversation within the participant observation because of the ongoing friction between the tour leader and the ground handler - partially caused by imprecise arrangements with regard to accommodation and transport - as well as on the occasion when it seemed as if the Mersing-Tioman ferry would be missed. But the logistical problems that originate in tourism because of the innate interdependence of the sectors were sufficient to stultify the view of the tour leader and so ultimately affect consumer satisfaction.

On the other hand, tourism has sometimes been perceived as a *fragile* service because of the inter-dependence of its sectors but the evidence from the participant observation was that this fragility may have been over-estimated in an extended product service such as a long-haul tour. Each event with the creation of within tour CS/D led through into another event - sometimes without much time for extensive reflection. Major macro events - such as the rainforest experience - were composed of a plethora of micro events and so there was some reduction in the potential damage to satisfaction caused by any one micro event. The converse also held - a *roll* of positive micro events was necessary in order to get close to the achievement of consumer satisfaction. Even a *cursory* consideration of the narrative from the participant observation can provide many examples to support this contention.

From the interpretation of the general context set by the characteristics of intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and inter-dependence it has become apparent that the general context also involves a consideration of tour operation and the tour operator *per se*.

Tour operation/tour operator

With regard to the tour operator it was the stated view of several management interviewees that consumers sometimes travelled with a tour operator because of the perceived *ethos* of the operator. Indeed, this was a corporate myth within the operator used for the participant observation. From this it could be supposed that consumers would filter their antecedent thoughts through a general context that attached due weight to the *ethos* of the tour operator concerned. It would seem that this would create a fairer set of evaluations of CS/D by the consumer. In fact, this was not always the case - sometimes because not all consumers were aware of the *ethos* and sometimes because there was resistance to the *ethos*. Hence, some of the dissatisfaction with the tour leader performance role within the participant observation could be ascribed to a non recollection or imprecise recollection of the stated role of the tour leader as an unobtrusive facilitator rather than a courier type guide. The resultant CS/D was flawed.

Value and quality

From the evidence in the literature it would not have been possible to ignore the potentially confusing influence within the general context of the other evaluative concepts - value and quality. Some observations are required.

With regard to *price* and *value* it did seem that it had been possible for consumers within the participant observation to recognise a consumer reference price - consumers had a price point in memory based on experience and cross comparison of long-haul service prices. The relative prices of the various market providers was known to most of the tour members. Perhaps this was one explanation for the comparatively *limited* mention of the term price in conversations about the attributes and experiences within the observed tour or previous tours. Even in the early few days, during which there was much discussion of previous tours, price was not part of mainstream conversation - almost as if decisions on price were not a consideration or that they *had* been a consideration but, once taken, were not again focussed upon and scrutinised against each and every element of the tour. However, the researcher was not alone in these

interpretations - Crouch (1994 : 6) with a very different methodology also concluded that:

'... long-haul tourism appears to be less price sensitive (than short-haul)... destinations should concentrate on differentiating the experience (db emphasis) they are able to provide...'

Lawson, Gnoth and Paulin (1994 : 8-9) also concluded that:

'All evidence seems to point to a very poor association between tourists' perceived prices and actual prices, and the most sensible conclusion seems to be that prices of tourism activities at destinations are generally unimportant for tourists... Involvement with the consumption of attractions and activities... is more likely to be affective... with little true regard to price...'

On the other hand, wider aspects of *value* - within the orbit of Zeithaml (1988), Holbrook and Corfmann (1985) and Holbrook (1994) - did receive rather more attention. This finding was not without relevant empirical support elsewhere - Duke and Persia (1996) in a study of escorted tours among US consumers found value to be strongly emphasised with regard to pre-tour importance.

During the participant observation there were numerous consumer comments on value from the perspective of a balance between benefits and sacrifices. The prior experience with similar brands was one clear reason for the ability to make judgements on value - prior experience created preferences and the comparative ranking of one tour against another. With the unfolding of the tour experience judgements on value were also made for particular events against other events - although value was never a *dominant* element within the general context.

However, these consumer judgements of value were largely *distinct* from consumer judgements of satisfaction. The same interpretation may be applied to consumer conversations on quality. Otto and Ritchie (1996 : 165) concurred with this view:

'... the stream of research from the general marketing field has shown that subjective, affective and experiential factors comprise a substantial portion of consumer satisfaction with services. In other words, service quality measures may be insufficient to assist in our understanding of satisfaction in the tourism industry.'

Although attempts have been made to encompass value and satisfaction within one theoretical framework they did not emerge with any particular strength from the participant observation. *Consumers did not appear to freely inter-mingle the concepts of satisfaction and value and so an interpretation would suggest that a judgement of CS/D was not reliant on a prior judgement of value. From this point of view, therefore, the research did not appear to support the Zeithaml and Bitner (1996)*

scheme that placed value and quality in an important and subordinate position to satisfaction.

Nevertheless, in terms of the concentration of conversation during the participant observation it would seem that of the three evaluative judgements - satisfaction, value, quality - it was satisfaction that was the key evaluative judgement.

Such an interpretation seems to be consistent with the perceived consumer predilection towards a positive experience - contrary to some management views - a hedonic, intangible and subjective experience that was intrinsically motivated and driven toward the pleasure and arousal of satisfaction above and beyond more banal judgements of value and quality. Consumer satisfaction covered a wider spectrum of consumer experience than value and quality - whether high value or low value, high quality or low quality each of which was not directly correlated in any case either to high satisfaction or low satisfaction. Satisfaction was wider than price, price-based value, a wider interpretation of value or the widest interpretation of quality. Consumer evaluations ran beyond statements such as 'The boat trip was good value and, therefore, I was satisfied'. The more common judgement was 'I expected to pay for the boat trip but it was included in the overall price - so that was good value - and also I really enjoyed getting to grips with the snorkelling and getting to know the tour leader better ... that was really satisfying.'

The judgement of high or low satisfaction depended on the interplay of the recognised CS/D antecedents within the specific and general context in which the distinctive quality and value judgements were a part but not necessarily a critical part.

7.5 CS/D Judgement

Following the interaction of the antecedents and the filtering process created by the specific and general contexts, the consumer either makes an immediate CS/D judgement or delays judgement - especially the verbalisation of judgement - until further time has elapsed and the judgement can be made on a firmer basis. An immediate judgement or a delayed judgement is attached to each micro event and the specific verbal expression of such judgement should be apparent from the participant observation narrative.

The subject of within tour CS/D judgements had not been approached by management - except at a largely intuitive level - and so the evidence for the interpretation rests on the participant observation.

7.6 Action and Inaction

The CS/D judgement, when verbalised (or observed in some other form) is then acted upon or not acted upon by the consumer and other concerned people (other consumers, the tour leader, other consumer service personnel, or members of the host population). In most cases the action will be *ordinary*, most probably short term and confined to the individual consumer and other concerned people. Occasionally, the action may be *extra-ordinary*, possibly short term but most probably also long term and involving the ground handler direct and/or the tour operator.

Of course, action requires that the consumer is self aware with regard to CS/D and that the other consumers, tour leader and consumer service personnel or, indeed, host population are aware of the CS/D of the consumer - and in a position to act. This may not be the case.

Inaction

Some examples will illustrate reality. Deliberate *inaction* on the behalf of the tour leader seemed to be evident in the cause celebre of Paya Beach. Apart from some cursory remarks by the tour leader - that attempted to shift the attribution for the injuries sustained on the rocks towards the tourists themselves - the event was rather ignored as an actual and potential cause of smouldering within tour dis-satisfaction and remained as a main element of post-tour dis-satisfaction. Following this case, there was a perceptual shift by a number of the participants to reconsider the basis of attribution for the recurrent logistical problems - some doubt was placed on the tour leader account so that comments from the consumers on this long-running issue started to be subtly questioning. There was no suggestion, beyond the short defence of his position, that the tour leader would consider the event further - whether by making more stringent efforts to warn future groups of the dangers; or by suggesting a source of more immediate medical help; or by a change, even a partial change, in the denial of blame.

The inaction represented by the Paya Beach case was the most obvious support for an argument that the tour leader was not interested in the CS/D of the tour participants -

obviously an extremely negative influence on the CS/D. On the other hand, other cases detailed in the narrative contradicted this view. Also it could be argued that the tour leader was simply unaware of the strength of the dis-satisfaction that the case provoked - that the inaction was not *deliberate*. He had suggested that it was uncommonly difficult to fathom the expectations of the tour group - indeed, any tour group with English participants - so it is not unreasonable to suggest that it was *also* difficult to fathom *other* antecedent elements and a CS/D judgement that was partly based on those elements.

This last interpretation - borne along from some evidence within the participant observation and also a logical deduction from the literature regarding the difficulties experienced by individuals to isolate antecedent elements such as emotions even within more controlled situations - suggested the crucial need for the recruitment or training and education of a tour leader with an awareness (at the very least) of the antecedents of satisfaction, their possible interaction in context and their development through time within tour. Inaction at this stage certainly compounded consumer dis-satisfaction.

Action

In contrast, it is also possible to illustrate *action* on the behalf of the tour leader - there were many occasions during which the tour leader dealt unobtrusively and efficiently with logistical elements of performance in a way that was wholly beneficial to CS/D. Sometimes this performance was clearly recognised by the consumers - at other times it was completely unidentified. On occasion, too, the action of the tour leader was restricted by a consumer/tour leader gap in perceived but unspoken consumer requirements with regard, say, to specific or general activities for a forthcoming day or evening. In the participant observation, the effect on CS/D of this situation would have been difficult to gather purely from conversation with consumers but was clear from conversation with the tour leader. Perhaps, though, at least within the context of the EM tour and probably in a wider tour context, too, there should be a minimum baseline of action by a tour leader - whether or not ostensibly driven by CS/D or not - especially early in a tour when the tour leader will find it particularly difficult to fathom partially concealed antecedents. The lack of action by the EM tour leader at Penang airport to account for all the consumers provides a case in point. This event generated some initial, although submerged dis-satisfaction that only truly emerged in the post-tour consumer interviews.

It is also possible to illustrate the action of other consumers in a group, consumer service personnel *and* the host population. Perhaps, though, given the thrust of the argument elsewhere which has placed an emphasis on the tourism consumer as a producer it is particularly worthwhile to illustrate the influence of action by the individual consumer on the experience of CS/D. Perhaps, too, consumer action can have the most obvious and immediate effect on one micro-event of CS/D because there is no time lag between the direct or indirect conveyance of CS/D through to other people who may have (or not have) the inclination and ability to influence CS/D. Of course, this does assume that the *consumer* has the inclination and ability to act and, conversely, consumer inaction may create the most probable conditions for the slide toward CS - or more likely CD - through inertia.

Consumer action based on CS/D, even partially formed CS/D, is part of the moment by moment consumer experience and illustrations may range from seemingly prosaic, apparently minor actions on a tour through to more considered actions and on to yet more zealous actions such as the more focussed reading of guidebooks or increased discussion both with other tour participants and the tour leader regarding specific upcoming activities. The latter actions resulted on the observed tour from an early and general sense of overly passive experience which did not conform to antecedent expectations and so forth and did not seem to match with the specific context of an exploratory ethos that the tour operator represented and so forth.

Ultimately, too, the action of the consumer may verge away from *ordinary* action and toward *extraordinary* action. Such action was outlined in the management interviews and the researcher is also aware of it from personal and anecdotal evidence within the trade. At one end of the scale the consumer may contact the ground handler direct in order to resolve an issue of CS/D (invariably CD) - an action that may be stipulated in a brochure as a necessary step following within tour action or inaction from a tour leader (and a step which any form of later monetary redress would require). At the other end of the scale a consumer may leave the tour or a group of consumers may leave a tour leader - perhaps surprisingly there is anecdotal evidence of this latter occurrence. On the participant observation tour there was no extra-ordinary action within tour - although there might have been if the logistical problem on the Mersing-Tioman crossing had not turned out favourably. Out of tour there was the threat of legal action from one consumer - as a consequence of the Paya Beach event - although in the view of some management such threats are no longer extra-ordinary.

7.7 Beyond Action and Inaction - CS/D through time

CS/D through time

Following on from one micro-event of CS/D, the action or inaction and the positive or negative modification or stultification of CS/D that it occasions a feedback loop may occur which may then influence the antecedents of a further loop. As with each of the other elements of the interpretation framework there was constant evidence of this process on the participant observation tour - the researcher made a first attempt at some graphical representation of this process on the route to Taman Negara Day 5.

Actually, however, many judgements concerning the initial micro events were delayed and so remained unclosed whilst the participants sought further evidence to support their evaluations (fig 7.1 / fig. 7.3). But as the tour developed such non-closure was rare. Management had rather suggested that the early stage of a tour was crucial and that consumer evaluations of the tour relied on first impressions. The researcher would agree that a consumer might be affected by an indifferent start but the overall evidence suggests that there are so many possibilities for uncertainty with consumer evaluations of CS/D at the beginning of a tour that much evaluation is effectively held in abeyance. In fact, although there were reticent CS/D judgements made as early as Day 2 in Penang during the participant observation - and there were other events that occasioned an expression of CS/D - the narrative clearly shows that these judgements were only truly expressed in *quantity* and with *alacrity* toward Day 10 at Paya Beach and beyond. Summary judgements were also frequent at this stage of the tour and these showed clear development from the earlier more tentative, interim attempts at such judgements.

The tour operator in the guise of the ground handler, say, or the tour leader has many opportunities to redeem performance as the tour progresses. But, of course, such opportunities have to be taken. With the unfolding of the tour the consumer begins to unravel a pattern of performance from the tour operator and the tour leader - and also the consumer per se, other consumers and so forth. As time progresses other antecedents are also evaluated with more certainty within the vortex model and so micro events of CS/D with associated action or inaction show increasing tendency toward closure. Accordingly, the progression of a tour sees the emergence of a *time-certainty model* so that a consumer is able to comment and support not only judgements of CS/D within micro-events of CS/D but also overall CS/D.

There may not be a steady progression towards such CS/D certainty (fig. 7.3.1). In addition to a model that might follow the outline of an *exponential curve* it is also feasible to envisage a model that shows a *decrease* in certainty - such as happened on the participant observation tour during the reappraisal of attributions following the Paya Beach event (fig. 7.3.2). With further evidence, certainty may be *re-established* although it is possible to envisage a situation in which certainty continued to decrease with further contradictory evidence (fig. 7.3.3). However, the latter case was not observed on the participant observation tour or commented on by management.

The idea of a *steady progression* towards CS/D certainty may also not be realistic because of the clear *compartmentalisation* of a tour. Each compartment may act as a unit of CS/D judgement in itself, semi-isolated from a subsequent compartment so that only the *broad thread* of CS/D is initially carried from one compartment to another. This holds at least until the micro-events that comprise the compartment are closed and resolved. Just occasionally a micro-event cannot be further resolved in the mind of the consumer - so that positive and negative elements remain juxtaposed and irreconcilable. In this instance, the irreconcilable micro event has to be subsumed in importance beneath a resolved antecedent.

A steady progression towards CS/D may also be interrupted by specific *climaxes* during which the consumer is forced to confront the CS/D equation. Some climaxes caused by *memorable moments* or periods are *expected* by the consumers - in the case study tour this applied to the rainforest experience and the east coast beach experience which were compartmentalised by consumers prior to the tour. Other moments or periods occur as a *surprise* - sometimes in the most unlikely circumstances as at Jerantut. However, these may cause a surge of CS/D evaluation and certainty one way or another with regard to CS/D. Instead of an exponential curve, the form of the curve may be rather more *stepped* (fig. 7.3.4). This was indeed the perception regarding the progression of CS/D certainty on the participant observation tour. In essence, therefore, the memorable moment might stand out as a *key* arbitrator of overall satisfaction - the continual *swirl* of antecedents through the specific and general context might just be conceived by the consumer as a sort of *constant* in the background. The foreground is illuminated by memorable moments.

The tour leader request, on behalf of the ground handler, for some formal response by means of a CSQ also occasioned a mini-surge of evaluation although this was probably muted in comparison to the evaluation that might occur on a long-haul tour in which there was not such intense contact between consumers and a tour leader.

However, CS certainly evolves through time not just because of forced confrontation as in the case above but rather more importantly because the tourism consumer *purposefully* strives towards the attainment of CS during the consumption process. This was not often recognised by management who sometimes revealed a rather jaundiced view of consumer intent. It was present as a force within the participant observation not just in the case of one particularly positive tourist - whose purposeful striving towards CS was sometimes an irritant - but also *every* other consumer. Examples may be noted from the narrative.

Certainty and its importance.

The establishment of certainty is important because it most probably forms the basis of future decisions. Evidence from the post purchase consumer interviews as well as the observations within the tour suggested that repeat purchase or positive word-of-mouth recommendation are based on consumer certainty with regard to the experience - certainty concerning the state of CS/D and the process of CS/D. *For all the seeming complexity of the CS/D process a given consumer is normally able to unravel and disentangle the various elements - multifarious antecedent interplay, diverse specific and general contexts, multiple micro event CS/D judgements, and numerous actions and inactions.* In the event that the CS is uncertain the consumer will most probably not repurchase or recommend the product to other potential consumers - even if an objective judgement could arbitrate and confirm that CS was high. *A consumer who is certain with regard to the state and process of CS/D will be able to describe and explain this and will convince a potential consumer of the veracity of the CS/D judgement. A consumer with certain and positive thoughts on CS will act as a powerful advocate for a long-haul tour operator product. Paradoxically, however, it is interpolated that a consumer with a certain but negative judgement may withdraw from a wholly negative judgement because such a judgement casts unfavourable inference on the consumer concerned - the consumer probably has the most central role in performance and also in the positive generation of the other antecedents.* There is scope for further research in this regard but the evidence from the participant observation would suggest that the certain and positive consumer is likely to be more *proactive* and effusive in the role of advocate than the uncertain consumer. On the other hand, the certain and negative consumer is likely to be more reactive and defensive.

In sum.

The rate of formation, shape, and direction of the time-certainty curve is not fixed and pre-determined. However, a degree of assuredness with regard to the state and process of CS/D is engendered through time. Acknowledgement of this by management and perhaps a redistributed emphasis on the importance of CS/D away from the initial period of a tour might encourage the development of worthwhile pro-active management systems.

Eventually, some form of *final* reflection on CS/D is attained. This was gathered from discussions on former inclusive tours among the EM participants and also from the post-tour consumer interviews. The EM tour was *itself* compartmentalised within the larger schema of long-haul tours. Consumers returned to more normal existence and no longer thought extensively about the tour in CS/D terms. Some catalyst would be needed to prompt further thought - in the absence of a doctoral researcher this catalyst would probably occur during the search process for a further purchase of a long-haul inclusive tour and the subsequent CS/D formation on that tour.

Chapter 1 Introduction	Chapter 2 CS/D - Antecedents and antecedent temporal process	Chapter 3 Context	Chapter 4 Methodology	Chapter 5 Management interviews	Chapter 6 Participant observation	Chapter 7 Interpretation	<div>Chapter 8 Final overview and restatement</div> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Overview ◆ Research methodology ◆ Antecedents of CS/D ◆ CS/D process through time ◆ Further research </div>
---------------------------	--	----------------------	--------------------------	---------------------------------------	---	-----------------------------	---

Chapter 8: Final overview and restatement of research contribution.

8.0 Summary

Based on the evidence in the preceding chapters it is firmly held that this research thesis has added to both academic and practical knowledge and understanding regarding the antecedents of CS/D and the process of CS/D formation through time in long-haul tour operation.

Furthermore, the method of participant observation has been shown to be relevant and successful in pursuit of the thesis objectives with a potential contribution to the practical world of tour operation management and wider academic study. It is with regard to this method that this chapter will first draw attention.

8.1 Research methodology

Overview - CSQs and other methods vs. participant observation

Prior to this research there were few attempts at an analysis of CS/D through time in an extended service within a tourism context or even within a wider service context. In the academic literature attempts at such analysis generally considered CS/D as measurable by a stated set of attributes both prior to a service experience and then immediately after the service experience. A questionnaire was the main means of information gathering. In the practical world of tour operator management it was found that attempts at CS/D measurement were even more restrictive and tended to measure satisfaction only towards the end of an experience or after an experience was completed - again the CSQ was the principal method of information gathering because management was either unaware of other methods or overly and in most instances unjustifiably wary of their use. These attempts were considered by the researcher to be *inadequate* to the task of analysing the process of CS/D formation - although, of course, the completion by a consumer of a tour operator CSQ fulfills a primary although most often concealed management motive of helping to build a consumer data base for marketing purposes.

The charge of inadequacy with regard to CSQs was based on a variety of reasons: the questions were set by *management* from a management perspective of attributes affecting CS/D and both the *consumer voices* and the *consumer service personnel* voices were muted; *attributes* were viewed as *the whole* rather than *a part* of the tourism experience; the *time period* of measurement was too *limited*; the *questions* depended on the consumer ability and desire to *rationalise* and express thoughts and sometimes feelings *literately* and *honestly*.

Each of these and other bases for the inadequacies of much CS/D research were confronted by the participant observation research. This did *not* require an agenda to be set by the researcher - and would not require an agenda to be set by management in any future practical application - beyond a flexible observational framework based on an open consideration of existing theory and knowledge. Additionally, the consumer voices and to a lesser although nevertheless important extent the consumer service personnel voices were the *key* foundations of the whole technique and were more prone to a natural, unforced, honest and detailed evaluation of CS/D. With only some exceptions the ability to recall events among the consumers was high. Furthermore, examples of straightforward verbalisation in situ such as 'That was good' or the deeply ironic 'The hotel management would have difficulty running a bath yet alone a hotel' all helped contribute to a more powerful view on CS/D than the more bland type of response in a CSQ. Moreover, the tourism experience was observed and evaluated with reference to the *whole experience* and not merely with reference to attributes - a holistic view that is crucial in any service industry such as tourism - and, furthermore, was observed through its *temporal entirety* and not through any one or two snapshots. Finally, the consumers expressed themselves *verbally*.

The post tour consumer interviews were overwhelmingly corroborative of the description and analysis that emerged within the narrative from the participant observation. This provided additional confirmation of the strength of the participant observation technique.

Contribution - action for academics and practitioners

Dunn Ross and Iso-Ahola (1991 : 227-228) stressed that:

'... such sociological factors as income and socio-economic status affect tourism behaviour... (but) what matters is the individual's *cognitions* and *feelings* about the *experience* (db emphasis)...'

Ross (1993), too, made the commonsense although largely ignored point that *reactions* and *experiences* are more important than profiles when it comes to knowing about one's guests. Mattsson (1994 : 54) outlined further that:

'...underlying most dissatisfaction are *experience* gaps of some kind... These experience gaps are primarily of a cognitive or affective character... It is, therefore, important that the *reactions* of *customers* may be observed, recorded and acted on accurately...'

In this context Ryan (1995 : 214) stated that:

'There must be room for the expression of subjectivity in research especially in tourism research... (Moreover) Conversations that are open-ended and wide ranging are a valid means of data collection. The emotions and confusions they reveal are themselves part of the phenomenon called tourism, and attempts to attribute rationalism to the tourist experience may mislead our understanding of tourist motivation and behaviour.'

Additionally, Brent Ritchie (1996 : 67) in an assessment of the state-of- the art in tourism marketing/marketing research commented that:

'...(we) need to make a much greater effort to understand how the total stream of travel/vacation services, each of varying importance to the traveller/vacationer, interact and accumulate...'

The present research makes the effort to study satisfaction over such an *extended service experience* and also through the participant observation *concentrates on the experience* - the common exhortation among all the cited researchers. The participant observation moves firmly away from the strictures of the CSQ in order to understand the experience. As employed in this research it is non-intrusive - even more so than other 'in-situ' techniques with their consequent heightened self-awareness (Stewart and Hull 1996 : 3).

Albeit in tandem with more conventional management and consumer interviews and an ongoing literature search the participant observation produced a *rich, meaningful set of data* that was capable of *description, analysis and interpretation* both in the field and retrospectively.

This is a major academic contribution.

Furthermore, the researcher suggests that the appropriate use of the participant observation research methodology - illustrated in this research - provides a key to the further development of academic experience-based studies within tourism behaviour. The methodological approach outlined here may be adopted and adapted by other studies both within and beyond CS/D.

Additionally, it would be possible to envisage that the *management* of a long-haul operator could employ an external team of suitably trained personnel to analyse a wide range of their products from a consumer perspective with the use of such a technique. In the researcher's view this analysis could provide different and more valuable consumer information than that garnered from existing methods and could eventually be tailored to focus on and analyse specific aspects of CS/D that emerged from other more general analysis of CS/D. Recommendations, both specific and general, could then be made to management - in effect the tailored focus would produce tailored interpretations.

Moreover, such work would allow the *testing* of the findings in a variety of different contexts and so generate the benefits of multiple case studies that lay beyond the practical orbit and academic pre-requisites of this particular research study.

After Otto and Ritchie (1996 : 168) it is possible to argue - although confirmation requires further research - that:

'... even when tourism sectors have a clear functional component to them, as do accommodation and transportation services, *experiential benefits* (db emphasis) will remain a critical part of the process evaluation.'

Evidence of the key experiential role of tourism may require that information on tours is *always* supplemented with experiential information. In order to get close to the consumer and to deliver the type of 'new tourism' foreseen by Poon (1994)(see 3.2) the tour operator must search for new methods of data collection and analysis. *It would seem that participant observation is ideally suited to such a task - whether the task refers to 'policy research' at the strategic level, 'managerial research' at a more specific case based level or any other of the research categories suggested by Brent Ritchie (1994) (see 4.0.10)).* The implementation of an experiential service event / service experience audit might increase costs in the short term but in the long-term would create a more consumer focused sub-sector and alleviate the necessity for re-design that follows from *partial* consumer understanding.

Some other aspects of the research methodology - such as the flexible but controlled extended management interviews - have also contributed to the success of the research and have melded with the participant observation. But these other aspects have been rather more tried and tested within both research in the social sciences and management.

The distinctive contribution of this thesis to research methodology in tourism for both academics and management has been the prominent position reserved at the apex of the primary study for the participant observation.

8.2 Antecedents of CS/D

Overview - identification of antecedents, performance emphasis

With regard to the supposed antecedents of CS/D the research provided substantial evidence to suggest that the antecedents paralleled those proposed by a range of academic researchers in general consumer behaviour. The practical reality of a tourism situation met and matched with the partially or completely constrained experimental reality that had isolated the independent and interdependent antecedents of expectation, performance, disconfirmation, attribution, equity and emotion. However, contrary to some weight of evidence elsewhere the *performance* antecedent was considered to have the greatest effect on CS/D within the participant observation - performance from the individual consumer, the consumer service personnel (most notably the tour leader), the tour group of consumers, and perhaps, too, the host population - so much so that the performance antecedent occupied a pivotal and central role within the proposed vortex model of CS/D interaction.

Moreover, the performance of the individual consumer was the *key* performance within the range of people performers and performances - more key than the nevertheless important tour leader. The consumer *drives* performance towards a satisfactory end. In the words of one manager:

'The satisfaction comes from the performance ... it can come from all sorts of activities too - from learning how to pack and fold a tent through to reaching the highest point on the Atlas Mountains...'

However, it must be said that the performance role of the individual consumer was *not* generally stressed by management to the extent that became apparent within the participant observation. It might be suggested that this relegation of the consumer performance by the management interviewees beneath that of, say, the tour leader conformed to a management disposition toward *control*. Consumers as performers might appear to be less amenable to control than more objective attribute elements of performance - such as those represented by, say, accommodation grading or transport logistics - or the performance of tour operator/ground operator employees. There seemed to be a management belief that their own, or the ground operator's tour leaders/representatives acted within pre-determined control patterns - *established by*

management. Paradoxically, in the participant observation this was somewhat misguided.

Within the participant observation it was also possible to recognise the other components of expectancy disconfirmation apart from performance - *expectation and disconfirmation* - although the clearly evident, observed *pre-disposition* of consumers toward a favourable evaluation of outcome against evaluation standards was mostly overlooked by management.

Management recognised *attribution* even if in a rather resigned manner. Attribution, too, was especially evident on some distinct occasions within the participant observation *and* there was an ongoing weighting of evidence by consumers throughout the tour with regard to the locus of blame and so forth in the case of the tour leader vs. the ground operator. It was possible to note a link between performance and attribution. Positive attribution to *self* with regard to performance also emerged with some notable strength.

Emotion and *equity* were also recognised in the participant observation - and contributed a role that was much greater than was revealed by the management interviews.

A *vortex* of antecedents was conceived - positioned within a set of *specific* and *general contexts* (fig. 7.2). Performance lay at the core of the vortex and interacted - although not invariably - with the other antecedents.

Revised antecedents passed through a contextual filter. For the most part the consumer was aware of these contexts and balanced the various vortex components against them in the judgement of a *CS/D micro event*. The experience of consumers with tourism and long-haul tourism was found for the most part to have encouraged them to develop far more than a naive understanding of both the specific context of tourism - represented by the itinerary, destination, tour group members, and tour leader; as well as the general context of tourism - tourism as a service industry, tour operation and the tour operator. It was *management* that sometimes appeared the most naive - notably with regard to the extent of consumer experience and the rather less ambiguous context of long-haul tourism than otherwise perceived.

Invariably, early research into the antecedents of satisfaction - from the 1950s almost through to the 1990s - was conducted in an artificial environment, often with surrogate consumers, tended to concentrate almost exclusively on products, rarely on services and never on an extended service. The thesis research set about searching for and recognising the antecedents and their functioning anew. This was an almost complete reversal of the research situation of the early researchers. *Accordingly, the recognition of each of the antecedents within a tourism situation was in itself an addition and contribution to academic knowledge.*

Research into the tourism experience has most frequently originated from a psychological, sociological or anthropological perspective. The present research adopted a multi-disciplinary approach but was rooted in management - perhaps most specifically *services marketing* - and it is such a perspective of tourism experience which is most likely to form a *linkage* with management activity. Indeed, a strong case could be argued that consumer behaviour should be the cornerstone of management. Linkage was the intent from the outset of the research and has already been inferred through the suggestions with regard to the use of participant observation.

Therefore, it is necessary to consider the kind of lessons that may be learned from the overview on the CS/D antecedents.

Certainly, attention to the *process* of consumer satisfaction - represented in part by a consideration of the antecedents - is absolutely *required* if the promise of satisfaction is not to exceed the producer's ability to deliver in an environment that is increasingly competitive. Additionally, of course, the environment is increasingly litigious - *even if* consumers truly strive toward positive performance and satisfaction.

In more specific terms, the *performance* antecedent with its stress on personal and interpersonal rewards for individual consumers should be stressed in pre-tour marketing - but management should also ensure that the systems are in place *and* functioning in order to deliver such rewards. A baseline needs to be determined with regard to sought performance rewards on tours and any match or mismatch with the delivery system.

So, for example, an itinerary is an important element in satisfaction and the planning of the itinerary is crucial - but at the same time it should not be over-emphasised as a

constraint either in the pre-tour marketing or in the *performance delivery* during the tour experience.

This latter requirement will obligate the tour operator to establish a more mature control over tour leaders - rather than accept the present formal but side-stepped control. This might be achieved through a comprehensive programme of recruitment, initial training and ongoing training. Cran (1996 : 43) was surprised that:

'... given the contemporary business focus on customer service and the recognition of the critical role of front-line employees, more effort has not gone in to the identification and assessment of service orientation prior to selection.'

Mossberg (1995 : 437) saw the tour leader's ability to give service and project the company image as a crucial competitive advantage:

'The tour leader's performance within the service encounter can not only affect the company image, customer loyalty and word of mouth communication but it can also be the factor that differentiates the tour in question from the competitor's tours.'

From the participant observation it is apparent that this truth occurs because the tour leader can be the main contributor - animator almost - who encourages the individual consumer to generate a performance which is positive in its self-enhancement, self-protection and self-presentation to others (see 6.2.3). Management may well be aware of this - but both from the participant observation tour and a whole range of other tours talked through with the participants a reducible gap existed between management theory and reality.

A tour leader who does not make the required contribution may reduce satisfaction. This is particularly unacceptable when such a situation is avoidable through human resource programmes. Again with reference to the research framework of Brent Ritchie (1994 : 15) such a *strategic* statement by the researcher could be matched with a set of more *specific* statements that relate to the EM tour. So, the tour leader from the EM tour had worked out some coping behaviours for dealing with the stress which he constantly felt and which seriously affected performance (see 6.5. / 6.6 / 7.4.1) - but clearly needed some further help through ongoing training. Indeed, given the importance of the tour leader in the development of CS/D the *management* would do well to be aware of the range of work stressors that can affect an employee and potential management actions to alleviate such stressors - as confirmed by Law, Pearce and Woods (1995).

So from a consideration and understanding of performance which was identified as the core antecedent it becomes clear that there are many linkages to be made with the

various functions of management - marketing, human resource management, operations. *The description, analysis and interpretation of each antecedent of CS/D in an experience setting makes a special contribution to practical management research and ultimately business success.*

The contribution of the antecedent vortex - the third major element within the overview for this section is more appropriately dealt with in the next section. The vortex forms a part of a wider model of within tour CS/D.

8.3 CS/D process through time

Overview

Each vortex of antecedents together with its contextual set leads to a micro-event judgement of CS/D (fig. 7.1) - although sometimes this is delayed rather than immediate. This is further conceived to generate *ordinary action* or *inaction* on the part of individual consumers and/or consumers within a group and/or the tour leader and/or other consumer service personnel and/or the host population - or *extra-ordinary action* involving the ground handler and/or tour operator. Action or inaction is subsequently followed by *feedback* which closes a micro event - or a delay in feedback which leaves a micro-event unclosed.

As a direct result of the rather limited range of techniques employed by management in order to gauge CS/D - and the limited analysis that was undertaken even with established monitoring systems - an understanding of the development of CS/D through time was mainly an *intuitive* reaction by management. Few managers had not led tours at one time or another - this was particularly so among the niche operators - and so such intuition deserved respect. However, long-haul tourism has been fast evolving and so it is argued that management may need to be particularly aware of the possible weaknesses of intuition based on previous and comparatively distant hands-on experience. Managers suggested that the early period of a tour was crucial to the formation of CS/D - in fact consumers did not judge with any such alacrity. Many judgements of micro-event CS/D were *delayed* from the early period of a tour until further information was gleaned and the consumer could judge with greater confidence.

Certainty with regard to the overall CS/D judgement on the observed tour only emerged toward its conclusion. Moreover, it seemed that certainty might rise and fall through time - albeit that the consumer was *driven* to arrive at a *positive* view on the certainty of CS rather than CD. A negative measurement of CD may thus be thought of as *particularly* ruinous - the consumer has to confront an assault on self-protection and self-enhancement - and this no doubt goes some considerable way toward the vehemence with which management may be pursued for monetary compensation by consumers certain about their negative tourism experience. Management seemed for the most part oblivious to the positive consumer drive toward CS which was so closely tied in to consumer satisfaction with personal performance. In much of the literature, too, there appeared to be an unwritten assumption that CS was rather *difficult* to achieve - this research rather suggested that a contrary view was closer to the truth. In contrast, therefore, to another assumption tourism may not be so fragile an experience as is so often suggested. One negative micro-event of CD does not determine the fate of overall CS/D - there has to be a consistent series of negative CS/D judgements within micro-events - with incorporated negative action or inaction - in order to create overall CD.

Contribution

The field observation and conceptualisation of the CS/D process within tourism and certainly within the entirety of a long-haul inclusive tour appears to be unique in academic research.

Gilbert (1991) criticises much work in tourism consumer behaviour because it is general in nature or unsubstantiated empirically. This is not so in this particular work. A core of the research is the attempt to substantiate theory through a case study in an empirical context. This places the work firmly within the emerging field of 'critical ethnography' in which researchers have gone to the field to investigate consumers' experiences (Penaloza (1994)) - what they think, feel and do rather than what they *say* they think, feel and do. Furthermore, in the terms of Lilien and Kotler (1983 : 204) the conceptualisation is 'ambitious' insomuch as it identifies major variables, specifies fundamental relationships and also specifies exact sequences - it addresses the *time* dimension.

Dimanche and Havitz (1994) inferred that it was vital for concepts in consumer behaviour to be understood and measured in terms of a *time continuum* rather than at just one point in time. Such an approach reveals an evolving *process*. The tour

operator, with only the use of say a CSQ *may* catch the point in time at which a process has evolved to an apex - or may not. Furthermore, the operator has not begun to understand the process through time - so fundamental for both strategic development and the understanding of a particular case. Just through a deep knowledge of the EM tour a process was evident which revealed the role of closed and unclosed micro-events and within them the interaction and relative strength of antecedents; immediate and delayed judgements of CS/D; the role of action and inaction; feedback; and the development of certainty with regard to the overall CS/D judgement.

Perhaps it might be argued that the model of CS/D development through time (fig. 7.1) - and the ancillary models (fig. 7.2 - 7.4) - are straightforward and simple. But this should be supported as a *benefit* - as Seaton (1996 : 398) has argued:

'Good ideas may be simple ones... Much that is useful and true can be simply told.'

For all their simplicity, too, the models are dynamic.

Furthermore, in the spirit of this thesis the models are are not just *conceptual* - an aid to thought - but also *operational* insomuch as they could provide specific decision making support.

8.4. Further Research

Inevitably, some research aspects have not been concentrated upon to the extent that they deserved - this is one Ph.D and not several.

At the most basic level - whilst not negating the rationale for the concentration on just one tour - further research could check the findings and the method on further long-haul tours with similar or different tour operators, destinations, group compositions and so forth. Of course, it would be most satisfying if the method was adopted as a commercial reality by one or more tour operators. It would be feasible to train and manage a team of participant observers who would be able to prepare an actionable report for tourism management.

It might be possible also to deepen the research focus on key topical areas of tourism consumer research as recognised by Dimanche and Haritz (1994) - ego involvement, novelty, commitment and loyalty - with reference to CS/D and through the means of participant observation, too. So, for example, research might consider whether high involvement periods of tourism experience have a different satisfaction requirement

than low involvement periods of tourism experience. Or whether novelty seeking has as key a role in satisfaction as it does in motivation. Or, whether there might be scope for a future tracking study with the existing consumers from the EM tour in order to consider the relationship between CS/D and commitment to long-haul travel through time. Also since keeping consumers is less expensive than creating new ones a question could be framed to further understand and use the CS/D antecedents that create loyalty.

However, the researcher considers that the key to generating relevant research questions rests on the experiential approach. So much research that is produced is impracticable. Research ideas come alive from experience. It has been argued that consumer behaviour is best understood from experience - and so it is only a short logical step to argue that relevant future research in consumer behaviour will also arise from future experience, too.

APPENDIX 1

Postal Questionnaires

Gipsy Lane Headington Oxford OX3 0BP
Telex G83147 VIA Facsimile 0865 819559
Switchboard (0865) 741111
Direct line (0865) 819432 / 819402

**oxford
polytechnic**

Oxford Centre for Tourism and Leisure Studies

Appendix 1 Document A

Contact Letter

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am currently undertaking a programme of research into consumer behaviour in Tourism. I would be most grateful if you could take the time to fill in the attached questionnaire. Hopefully, you would agree that the questions are not over-intrusive but in any case your answers will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Return Address:-

David Bowen
OCTALS
Oxford Polytechnic
Gipsy Lane
Oxford
OX3 0BP.

Sincerely,

DAVID BOWEN

Senior Lecturer in Business.

Appendix 1 Document B

Postal Questionnaire

1. Is an attempt made in your organisation to monitor client satisfaction / dissatisfaction on vacation? (please tick.)

YES. _____ NO. _____

If no, please go to Q.6.

2. If yes, what methods have been used during the last 3 years? (please tick)

A. Sample questionnaire administered to clients during vacation. _____

B. Sample postal questionnaire. _____

C. 100% questionnaire administered to clients during vacation. _____

D. Sample client discussion group after vacation _____

E. Analysis of client letters. _____

F. Ground handler / rep. reports. _____

G. Ground handler / rep. debriefing at destination. _____

H. Sample telephone interviews after vacation. _____

I. Other(s) (please specify). _____

3. How would you rate the methods you have used to measure satisfaction / dissatisfaction on the scale below?

1. (High) 2. (Good) 3. (Average) 4. (Fair) 5. (Poor)

<u>METHOD.</u>	<u>RATING.</u>	<u>COMMENT.</u>
A	_____	_____
B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____
D	_____	_____
E	_____	_____
F	_____	_____
G	_____	_____
H	_____	_____
I	_____	_____

4. Are there any methods that you have not used over the last 3 years but anticipate using in future seasons? (please specify).

5. What constraints are placed on your analysis of satisfaction / dissatisfaction?

6. Would you consider, in collaboration with the Polytechnic, a pilot study of further attempts to measure satisfaction / dissatisfaction? (please tick).

YES _____ NO _____ MAYBE _____

7. If yes, which of the following would you consider to be of most relevance. Please rate on the scale below.

1. (High) 2. (Good) 3. (Average) 4. (Fair) 5. (Poor)

A. Analysis of written critical incidents
(particular good / bad experiences).

B. Participant observation (observation by
researcher participating in vacation experience.)

C. Pre vacation and post vacation questionnaire.

D. Pre vacation individual interviews.

E. Post vacation individual interviews.

F. Best methods in Q.3 above.

NAME

POSITION

COMPANY

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

Appendix 1 Document C

Postal Questionnaires Completed Replies

Tour Operator	Contact	Position
Abercrombie & Kent	Primrose Stobbs	Executive Director
African Safari Club	CT West	Director
Ainwaves	William Archer	Managing Director
Australian Pacific Tours	B. Dymant	Sales Administration Manager
Austravel	Jane Bolton	Executive PA
Bales	Mandy Bales	Marketing Manager
BA Holidays	J. Wolf-Corrigan	Marketing Projects Director
Contiki Travel	Dick Pamy	Marketing Director
Cygnus Wildlife	P. Dukes	Tour Manager
Far East Travel Centre	Nigel Lloyd	Marketing Director
Flamingo Tours of East Africa	Anne Radley	Manager
Globetrek	Himat Jobanpuyra	Administrative Manager
Grenadier	J. Ewart	Proprietor
Guerba	Martin Crabb	Director
Jetabout	Andrew Sproule	Product Assistant
Meon Travel	Greg Olszowski	Marketing Executive
Sherpa Expeditions	David Weiss	Operations Manager
TEFS	Bill Alborough	Managing Director
Thomas Cook Faraway	P. Faulkner	Quality Control
Twickers World	Eve Holroyd	Director

APPENDIX 3

Management Interviews

**OXFORD
BROOKES
UNIVERSITY**

Appendix 3 Document A

Initial Contact Letter



Gipsy Lane Campus
Headington Oxford OX3 0BP

Tel: 0865 483432/483402
Fax: 0865 483907

24/11/94

To: ---

**From: David Bowen
Field Chair Tourism, OBU.**

Dear ---,

I am currently researching into 'management views of client satisfaction - specifically with regard to long-haul tourism.' I would like to find out your views (or another suitable person) on the subject.

Is it possible to come down to ----- for this purpose, please - I'd ask for 30 minutes of your time.

I know and appreciate how busy you are! Wednesday 30 November or Wednesday 14 December would be ideal from my point of view.

Regards,

David Bowen.

Appendix 3 Document C

Extended Management Interviews Cover Guide

	What is it?
CS/D	What affects it?
	What is identified / measured / analysed / used?
	Who is consulted?
	Clients?
	Consumer service personnel?
	Management?
	Why bother?
	How and why does it change through time?

Effect of satisfaction of:

- Expectation
- Performance
- Disconfirmation
- Attribution
- Equity
- Emotion
- Others

Satisfaction and time:

- after van Raaij:
- Generic decision
- Information acquisition
- Initial booking
- Vacation activities
- Satisfaction / complaints

Tour operator identification / measurement / analysis / utilisation of satisfaction:

Complaint procedures:

Tourism satisfaction vis-a-vis:

- Other service industries
- Long-haul vs. short haul

In sum:

What is necessary in order for a tourism product to satisfy the consumer?

How would you improve levels of satisfaction re. your product?

Observations:

Inhibitors of communication:

- ... may not wish to reflect
- ...be able to reflect
- ...wish to communicate

Non response / pressured response

Non prompted / prompted answers

Company information:

Size - employees

History

Management process and organisational structure:

- Marketing
- Hrm
- Operations etc.

Product

Activities

Destinations

Clients:

- Demographic
- Socio-economic
- Life cycle
- Psychographic indices

Documentation and brochures

Thank-you!

I will send a summary within 7 days

Contacts, please

OXFORD
BROOKES
UNIVERSITY



Appendix 3 Document D

Post Interview Contact re. Accuracy

Gipsy Lane Campus
Headington Oxford OX3 0BP

Tel 0865 483432/483402
Fax.0865 483907

Many thanks for sparing the time to talk about 'management views on client satisfaction'

I enclose a review of the points that we covered. When you have time I would value any points that you would like to add (or dispute!)

In a couple of places I have asked for some specific clarification (marked in ink thus →).

Thanks once again,

Regards,

David Bowen.
Field Chair Tourism, OBU.

Appendix 3 Document E

Post Interview Reply re. Accuracy

25 November 1994

David Bowen,
Field Chair Tourism,
Oxford Brookes University,
Gipsy Lane Campus,
Headington,
Oxford.
OX3 0BP

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 3rd November, which was interesting reading, and I think accurately reflects the conversation that we had.

On the two points that you marked, I would comment:

1) There is no genuine difference between the management and the client perception of satisfaction. I merely meant that satisfaction for the client is a more emotive issue, e.g if the holiday is a success it was a wonderful, life enhancing experience (or a dreadful disaster and total waste of money). Management's criteria are that it is a success if it was run on schedule, on budget and there were no complaints.

2) I meant that the logistics of organizing, and therefore buying, a holiday are highly complex, and there are many possibilities for problems. What problems there are can partly be avoided by intelligent staff, good planning, training, technology, etc., but we can never take away the possibility of things going wrong. To the client it always looks like our fault, whereas the reality is often different.

I hope this completes the picture!

APPENDIX 6

Field Notes - Examples

Friday March 28

-Plan

Break fast long and lazy $\rightarrow 10^{35}$ even

Walk to End of bay

Then \rightarrow ferry transfer

Hence \rightarrow Singapore.

Singapore transfer \rightarrow Hotel Miramar

Evening in Singapore - MRT

system, Lau Pa Sat Eating Area

Walk \rightarrow Raffles

Raffles \rightarrow Boat Quay And on

to Singapore River

Taxi \rightarrow Miramar

Some review over breakfast when
(1) gave out the (2)

 questionnaire.

Questionnaire was very standard
and interestingly detailed -

Some of which were impossible eg on

hotel interesting, good, fair, poor!

Which one? Interesting / good.

(3) s heart was not in it -

see his attitude when discussing

them out - crumpled and rather

couldn't care less

(4), of course, said that they

were rather useful too; do

explained about focus groups of

8 or so people

(5) also thought the same.

"We just said that something

could be done about the

East Coast. Kuala Lumpur was

(1), (3) ASIF (2) Asian Overland

(4) Cusi (5) Singapore

worth it, but he hated @
clearing was not much up to it "

(6) " They might even find
it difficult to run a bath

(7) " It was rather incongruous
to have such a large restaurant

for such a small place "

(8) " Not to mention the lighting
that they used — did you
notice "

later (9) @ the transit, before
transfer — the hydrofoil said

" It is rather good that we
holiday in spirit. It is difficult
parts. I am quite looking
forward to Singapore, its good
to have new something to look
forward to all the time "

(6)(8) Jan

(7)(9) Sincerely

Ab " Well you can do that on any
holiday's, going from day
to day "

(10) s view was that the holiday
was good, a point that was
reinforced later. However, she
had similar points about the

accommodation as Ab. Notably,
that @ Tioman, for example, she
found it difficult to believe
that Singaporeans would put up
with poor accommodation.

In truth, the shower was
described as Libentificious pretence
and poor tiles); the door
to the toilet was made of

plywood and warped @ the
bottom; there was no radio, no
tv, just one chair, skinny
benches... But the food +

(10) Sincerely

eatery there was good.

Also - when there were young Chinese staying (and also USN USN / Eng ~ 24-28) - just arrived from Singapore in the morning.

Back to the morning, over breakfast, (11) had

said that there was a beach set out the next week... maybe stay an extra 1/2 day in 2 places - and to extend the tour. (12) Ideas were not

entirely clear here. Later, in the evening, on the way back from the Boat Quay

(13) said that 'no one would believe you - you've done so much in 2 weeks.

Thus is an interesting summation

(11) (12) (13) Donald

comment

(14) Agreed. (15) has yet to be tested on attribution but it

was interesting again to see how she defended the use of the "creeps" on the overnight train from Jerusalem - here Boston. "It was rather

fun to go by creeps, Although you found safer surrounded by (16) people rather than

just anyone else" (The fact that we surprised her up / one down) surprises - her surprises open for everyone to pass them (now I understand the Canadians there).

As mother made, just note how she had noticed the pencil about half an hour (14) (15) Since (16) Explanations

some people were disappointed
with the way licensed fish that took
us from the station → the
water. OK for the (and 2/3
others)

Then... back to breakfast again,
a few drinking out the glasses

(17) asked "So what should

I do with the rest (18)

group. Should I take them out
to the fishing boats?"

He spoke — "yes, everyone

enjoyed it"

(19) — "well, what was it? Just

fishing boats coming in?"

(20) "But you will not find

many places with the boats

parked just so at the

front"

He — he should go But, here
(17)(22) ASIF (18) Ex position (19) Bobbi

centrally, there is the first
file that (21) has asked since
a question — looking for clear
feedback. He asks for clear
clear "feed-forward" (If there is
since a term)

Now the forward to how Pa
sat eating piece. He asked

"So what do you think is the
satisfaction of the group
from the hour?"

(22) "I don't know. It's

just another job finished for me"

! won

He said that he would send

"The managed team" to him"

a computer, oh alright
then at home..

(21)(22) ASIF

Bibliography:

Abelson Robert P., Kinder Donald R., Peters Mark D., Fiske Susan T., 1982, Affective and Semantic Components in Political Person Perception, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol. 42, No. 4, pp.619-630.

Adelman Mara B., Ahuvia Aaron and Goodwin Cathy, Beyond Smiling, ch. 7, in Rust Roland T. and Oliver Richard L., 1994, Service Quality - New Directions in Theory and Practice, Sage Publications, London.

Agar Michael H., 1986, Speaking of Ethnography, Sage Publications, Beverley Hills, California, 1986.

Alderson Wroe, 1957, Marketing Behaviour and Executive Action, Richard D. Irwin, Homewood Il.

Anderson Bo, Berger Joseph, Zelditch Morris, Cohen Bernard P., 1969, Reactions to Equity, Acta Sociologica, Vol. 12, pp. 1-12.

Anderson Rolph E., 1973, Consumer Dissatisfaction: The Effect of Disconfirmed Expectancy on Perceived Product Performance, Journal of Marketing Research, pp. 38-44.

Arnould Eric J. and Price Linda L., 1993, River Magic: Extraordinary Experience and the Extended Service Encounter, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 20, pp. 24-45.

Atherton Trevor, 1994, Package Holidays: Legal Aspects, Tourism Management, Vol. 15 (3), pp. 193-199.

Austin William and Walster Elaine, 1974, Reactions to Confirmations and Disconfirmations of Expectancies of Equity and Inequity, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol. 30, No. 2, pp. 208-216.

Bailey Carol A., 1996, A Guide to Field Research, Pine Forge Press, London.

Bateson John E.G., 1995, 3rd. edn., Managing Services Marketing, The Dryden Press, London.

Bagozzi Richard, 1978, Principles of Marketing Management, Science Research Associates, Chicago.

Bello Daniel C. and Etzel Michael J., 1985, The Role of Novelty in the Pleasure Travel Experience, Journal of Travel Research, pp. 20-26.

Berry Leonard L. and Parasuraman A., 1993, Building a New Academic Field - The Case of Services Marketing, Journal of Retailing, Vol. 69, pp. 13-60.

Bettman James R., An Information Processing Theory of Consumer Choice, Reading Ma., Addison-Wesley.

Bitner Mary Jo, 1990, Evaluating Service Encounters: The Effects of Physical Surroundings and Employee Responses, Journal of Marketing, pp. 71-84.

Bitner Mary Jo, Managing the Evidence of Service, in Scheuing Eberhard and Christopher William, eds., 1993, ch.29, The Service Quality Handbook, AMACOM Press, New York.

Bitner Mary Jo, Booms Bernard H. and Tetreault Mary Stanfield, 1990, The Service Encounter - Diagnosing Favourable and Unfavourable Incidents, Journal of Marketing, Vol. 54, pp.71-84.

Bitner Mary Jo and Hubbert Amy R., Encounter Satisfaction Versus Overall Satisfaction Versus Quality, ch. 3, in Rust Roland T. and Oliver Richard L., 1994, Service Quality - New Directions in Theory and Practice, Sage Publications, London.

Blumer H., (1954), What is Wrong with Social Theory?, American Sociological Review, vol.19, pp. 3-10.

Blumer H., (1969), Symbolic Interactionism, Englewood Cliffs, NJ., Prentice Hall.

Bobrow D.G. and Norman D.A, 1975, Some Principles in Representation and Understanding: Studies in Cognitive Science, McGraw-Hill, New York.

Bolton Ruth N. and Drew James H., 1994, Linking Customer Satisfaction to Service Operations and Outcomes, ch. 8, in Rust Roland T. and Oliver Richard L., Service Quality - New Directions in Theory and Practice, Sage Publications, London.

Bolton Ruth N. and Drew James H., 1991, A Multistage Model of Customers' Assessments of Service Quality and Value, Journal of Consumer Research, vol. 17, pp. 375-384.

Booms Bernard H. and Bitner Mary J., Marketing: Strategies and Organisation Structures for Service Firms, in Donnelly James H. and George William R., 1981, Marketing of Services, American Marketing Association, Chicago, Illinois, pp. 47-51.

Booms Bernard H. Donnelly James H. and George William R., 1981, Marketing of Services, American Marketing Association, Chicago, Illinois.

Botterill David T., 1987, Dissatisfaction with a Construction of Satisfaction, Annals of Tourism Research, 14, pp.139-140.

Bouissac Paul, The Marketing of Performance, in Umiker-Sebeok Jean, Marketing and Semiotics, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin, pp.391-406.

Brehmer Berndt, 1980, In One Word: Not From Experience, Acta Psychologica, 45, pp. 223-241.

Brendon P., 1990, Thomas Cook, 150 Years of Popular Tourism, Secker and Warburg, London.

Brent Ritchie J.R., Roles of Research in Tourism Management, in Brent Ritchie J.R. and Goeldner Charles R., 1994, Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Research: A Handbook for Managers and Researchers, 2nd. edn., John Wiley & Sons, New York, pp. 13-21.

Brent Ritchie J.R., 1996, Beacons of Light in an Expanding Universe: An Assessment of the State-of-the-Art in Tourism Marketing/Marketing Research, Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, Vol. 5 (4), pp. 49-84.

Brookes Donald and Stodin Nicholas, 22/03/95, The New Service Relationship, Canadian Business Review.

Brown Jonathan and Weiner Bernard, 1984, Affective Consequences of Ability versus Effort Ascriptions, Journal of Education Psychology, 76 (1), pp. 148-158.

Brown Stephen W. and Swartz Teresa A., 1993, A Gap Analysis of Professional Service Quality, Journal of Marketing, vol. 53, pp. 92-98.

Bryman Alan and Burgess Robert G., eds., 1994, Analyzing Qualitative Data, Routledge, London.

Bryman Alan and Burgess Robert G, Reflections on qualitative data analysis, ch.11, in Bryman Alan and Burgess Robert G., eds., 1994, Analyzing Qualitative Data, Routledge, London, pp. 216-226.

Bulmer M., ed., 1982, Social Research Ethics, Macmillan, London.

Burgess Robert G., 1984, In the Field - An Introduction to Field Research, Unwin Hyman, London.

Calantone Roger J. and Mazanec Josef A., 1991, Marketing Management and Tourism, Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 18, pp. 101-119.

Cardozo Richard N., 1965, An Experimental Study of Customer Effort, Expectation, and Satisfaction, Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. II, pp. 244-249.

Carlsmith J. Merrill and Aronson Elliot, 1963, Some Hedonic Consequences of the Confirmation and Disconfirmation of Expectancies, Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, Vol. 66, No. 2, pp. 151-156.

Churchill Gilbert A. and Surprenant Carol, 1982, An Investigation Into the Determinants of Customer Satisfaction, Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. XIX, pp. 491-504.

Cicourel Aaron V., 1964, Method and Measurement in Sociology, The Free Press, New York.

CIMTIG (seminar), Australian Tourism Commission - Research in Advertising, London, March 4 1996.

Cohen E., 1972, Toward a Sociology of International Tourism, Social Research, 39, 164-182.

Cohen Erik, 1985, The Tourist Guide: The Origins Structure and Dynamics of a Role, Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 12, pp. 5-29.

Cohen Erik, 1988, Traditions in the Qualitative Sociology of Tourism, Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 15, pp. 29-46.

Cooper Harris M., 1989, Integrating Research - A Guide for Literature Research, 2nd edn., Sage Publications, London.

Cowell Donald, 1984, The Marketing of Services, Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford.

Cran David J., 1994, Towards Validation of the Service Orientation Construct, The Services Industries Journal, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 34-44.

Crouch Geoffrey I., 1994, Demand Elasticities for Short-Haul versus Long-Haul Tourism, Journal of Travel Research, Fall, pp. 2-7.

Crompton John L., 1981, Dimensions of the Social Group Role in Pleasure Vacations, Annals of Tourism Research, VIII (4), pp. 550-568.

Curren Mary T., and Folkes Valerie S., (1987), Attributional Influences on Consumers Desires to Communicate about Products, Psychology and Marketing, 4 (Spring), pp. 31-45.

Czepiel John A., Solomon Michael R., Surprenant Carol F., 1985, The Service Encounter, Lexington Books, Lexington, Massachusetts.

Dalton Melville, 1959, Men who Manage, John Wiley, London.

Dann Graham, Nash Dennison and Pearce Philip, 1988, Methodology in Tourism Research, Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 15, pp. 1-27.

Dardin William and Perrault William, 1975, A Multivariate Analysis of Media Exposure and Vacation Behavior with Lifestyle Covariates, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 2, pp. 93-103.

Deighton John, 1984, The Interaction of Advertising and Evidence, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 11, pp. 763-770.

Deighton John, Managing Services When the Service is a Performance, ch. 6, in Rust Roland T. and Oliver Richard L., 1994, Service Quality - New Directions in Theory and Practice, Sage Publications, London.

Denzin N.K., 1978, The Research Act in Sociology, McGraw-Hill, New York.

Dexter L., 1970, Elite and Specialised Interviewing, Evanston, Ill., Northwestern University Press.

Dimanche Frederic and Havitz Mark E., 1994, Consumer Behaviour and Tourism: Review and Extension of Four Study Areas in Crotts John C. and van Raaij W. Fred, Economic Psychology of Travel and Tourism, The Haworth Press Inc., New York.

Donnelly James H. and George William R., 1981, Marketing of Services, American Marketing Association, Chicago, Illinois.

Douglas J.D., 1976, Investigative Social Research, Sage Publications, Beverley Hills

Duke Charles R., and Persia Margaret A., 1996, Consumer-Defined Dimensions for the Escorted Tour Industry Segment: Expectations, Satisfaction, and Importance, Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, Vol. 5, No. 1/2, pp. 77-99.

Dunn Ross Elizabeth L. and Iso-Ahola Seppo E., 1991, Sightseeing Tourists' Motivation and Satisfaction, Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 18, pp. 226-237.

Easterby-Smith Mark et al., 1991, Management Research, Sage Publications, London.

Echtner Charlotte M. and Brent Ritchie J.R., 1991, The Meaning and Measurement of Destination Image, The Journal of Tourism Studies, Vol. 2, No. 2., pp. 2-12.

Einhorn Hillel J. and Hogarth Robin M., 1978, Confidence in Judgement: Persistence of the Illusion of Validity, Psychological Review, Vol. 85, No. 5, pp. 395-416.

Eisenhardt Kathleen M., 1989, Building Theories from Case Study Research, Academy of Management Review, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp.532-550.

EIU, Outbound Markets / Market Segmentation Studies - The UK Long-Haul Market, EIU Travel and Tourism Analyst, No. 1, 1990.

Ekman Paul., Friesen Wallace V., and Ancoli Sonia A., 1980, Facial Signs of Emotional Experience, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol. 39, No.6, pp. 1123-1134.

Engel J.F., Kollat D.J. and Blackwell R.D., 1968, Consumer Behaviour, Holt, Reinhart and Winston, New York.

Enis Ben M. and Roering Kenneth J., 1981, in Donnelly James H. and George William R., 1981, Marketing of Services, American Marketing Association, Chicago, Illinois, pp. 1-4.

Festinger Leon, 1962, A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance, Tavistock Publications, London.

Fiebelkorn Sandra L., Retail Service Encounter Satisfaction: Model and Measurement, in Czepiel John A., Solomon Michael R., Surprenant Carol F., 1985, The Service Encounter, ch. 12, Lexington Books, Lexington, Massachusetts.

Fine G.A., 1987, With the Boys, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Fisk Raymond P., Toward a Consumption / Evaluation Process Model for Services, in Donnelly James H. and George William R., 1981, Marketing of Services, American Marketing Association, Chicago, Illinois, pp. 191-195.

Fisk Raymond P., Brown Stephen W. and Bitner Mary Jo, in Glynn William J. and Barnes James G., 1995, Understanding Services Management, John Wiley and Sons, Chichester pp. 1-32.

Fisk Raymond P. and Coney Kenneth A., Postchoice Evaluation: An Equity Theory Analysis of Consumer Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with Service Choices, in Hunt H. Keith (ed.), 1982, Conceptual and Empirical Contributions to Consumer Satisfaction and Complaining Behaviour, Indiana University, pp. 9-16.

Fisk Raymond P. and Young Clifford E., 1985, Disconfirmation of Equity Expectations: Effects of Consumer Satisfaction with Services, Advances in Consumer Research, Vol. 12, pp. 340-345.

Folkes Valerie S., 1984a, Consumer Reactions to Product Failure: An Attributional Approach, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 10, pp. 398-409.

Folkes Valerie S., 1984b, An Attributional Approach to Postpurchase Conflict Between Buyers and Sellers, Advances in Consumer Research, Vol. XI, pp. 500-503.

Folkes Valerie S., 1988, Recent Attribution Research in Consumer Behavior: A Review and New Directions, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 14, pp. 548-563.

Folkes Valerie S., 1990, Conflict in the Marketplace: Explaining Why Products Fail, ch. 8, in Graham Sandra and Folkes Valarie S., Attribution Theory, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hove and London.

Folkes Valerie S., How Consumers Predict Service Quality, ch. 5, in Rust Roland T. and Oliver Richard L., 1994, Service Quality - New Directions in Theory and Practice, Sage Publications, London.

Folkes Valerie S. and Kotsos Barbara, 1986, Buyers' and Sellers Explanations for Product Failure: Who Done It?, Journal of Marketing, Vol.50, pp. 74-80.

Folkes Valerie S., Koletsky Susan and Graham John L., 1987, A Field Study of Causal Influences and Consumer Reaction: The View from the Airport, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 13, pp. 534-539.

Francken Dick A. and van Raaij Fred A., 1981, Satisfaction with Leisure Time Activities, Journal of Leisure Research, pp. 337-352.

Geertz Clifford, 1987, Works and Lives - The Anthropologist as Author, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California.

Geertz Clifford, 1993, The Interpretation of Cultures - Selected Essays, Fontana Press, London.

Geva Aviva and Goldman Ariele, Changes in the Perception of a Service during its Consumption: A Case of Organised Tours, European Journal of Marketing, 23, 12, pp. 44- 52.

Gilbert D.C., 1991, An Examination of the Consumer Behaviour Process Related to Tourism, in Progress in Tourism, Recreation and Hospitality Research, ed. Cooper C.P., Belhaven Press, London.

Gitelson Richard J. and Crompton John L., 1984, Insights into the Repeat Vacation Phenomenon, Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 11, pp. 199-214.

Glaser B. and Strauss A., 1967, The Discovery of Grounded Theory, Chicago, Aldine.

Glynn William J. and Barnes James G., 1995, Understanding Services Management, John Wiley and Sons, Chichester.

Goffmann E., 1959, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Doubleday, Garden City, NY.

Gold R.L., Roles in Sociological Field Observations, in McCall G.J. and Simmons J.L., 1969, Issues in Participant Observation, Addison Wesley, Reading MA.

Gottlieb Alma, 1982, Americans Vacations, Annals of Tourism Research, 9(2), pp. 165-168.

Gould Stephen J., 1995, Researcher Introspection as a Method in Consumer Research: Applications, Issues, and Implications, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 21, pp. 719-722.

Gremler Dwayne D., Bitner Mary Jo and Evans Kenneth R., The Internal Service Encounter, 1994, International Journal of Service Industry Management, Vol. 5 (2), pp. 34-56.

Grant David, The Package Travel Regulations 1992: Damp squib or triumph of self-regulation?, Tourism Management, Vol. 17, No. 5, pp. 329-321.

Grant David and Mason Stephen, Holiday Law, Street and Maxwell, 1995.

Gray H.P., 1970, International Travel - International Trade, Lexington: Heath Lexington Books.

Gronroos Christian, 1978, A Service Orientated Approach to Marketing of Services, European Journal of Marketing, Vol. 12, No. 8, pp. 588-601.

Gronroos Christian, 1981, Internal Marketing - An Integral Part of Marketing Theory, in Booms Bernard H. Donnelly James H. and George William R., Marketing of Services, American Marketing Association, Chicago, Illinois, pp. 236-238.

Gronroos Christian, 1984, A Service Quality Model and its Marketing Implications, European Journal of Marketing, Vol. 18, No. 4, pp. 37-44.

Gummesson Evert, 1991, Qualitative Methods in Management Research, Sage Publications, London.

Gunn Clare A., A Perspective on the Purpose and Nature of Tourism Research Methods, in Brent Ritchie J.R. and Goeldner Charles R., 1994, Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Research: A Handbook for Managers and Researchers, 2nd. edn., John Wiley & Sons, New York, pp. 3-11.

Hammersley Martyn, 1990, Reading Ethnographic Research, Longman, London. pp. 80-82.

Hammersley Martyn, 1992, What's wrong with Ethnography? - Methodological Explorations, Routledge, London.

Hammersley Martyn and Atkinson Paul, 1983, Ethnography - Principles in Practice, Tavistock Publications, London

Hanefors Monica and Larsson Lena, 1993, Video Strategies Used by Tour Operators, Tourism Management, pp. 27-33.

Hartmann Rudi, 1988, Combining Field Methods in Tourism Research, Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 15, pp. 88-100.

Havlena William J. and Holbrook Morris B., 1986, The Varieties of Consumption Experience: Comparing Two Typologies of Emotion in Consumption Behaviour, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 13, pp. 394-409.

Heider F., 1958, The psychology of interpersonal relations, Wiley, New York.

Helson Harry, 1964, Adaptation-Level Theory, Harper and Row, London.

HMSO, The Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992.

Hoch Stephen J. and Deighton John, 1989, Managing What Consumers Learn from Experience, Journal of Marketing, Vol. 53, pp. 1-20.

Hoch Stephen J. and Ha Young-Won, 1986, Consumer Learning: Advertising and the Ambiguity of Product Experience, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 13, pp. 221-233.

Hochschild Arlie Russell, 1982, Emotional Labor in the Friendly Skies, Psychology Today, June 1982, pp. 13-15.

Hochschild Arlie Russell, 1983, The Managed Heart - Commercialisation of Human Feeling, University of California Press, Berkeley.

Hoch Stephen J. and Deighton John, 1989, Managing What Consumers Learn from Experience, Journal of Marketing, Vol. 53, pp. 1-20.

Holbrook Morris B., Lehmann Donald R., O'Shaughnessy, 1986, Using Versus Choosing: The Relationship of the Consumption Experience to Reasons for Purchasing, European Journal of Marketing, 20, 8, pp. 49-62.

Holbrook Morris B., Hirschmann Elizabeth C., 1982, The Experiential Aspects of Consumption: Consumer Fantasies, Feelings and Fun, Journal of Consumer Research Vol. 9, pp. 132-140.

Holbrook Morris B., Chestnut Robert W., Oliva Terence A., Greenleaf Eric A., 1984, Play as a Consumption Experience: The Roles of Emotions, Performance, and Personality in the Enjoyment of Games, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 11, pp. 728-739.

Holbrook Morris B. and Corfman Kim P., Quality and Value in the Consumption Experience: Phaedrus Rides Again, in Jacoby Jacob and Olson Jerry C., 1985, Perceived Quality - How Consumers View Stores and Merchandise, ch. 2, Lexington Books, Lexington, Mass.

Holbrook Morris B., The Nature of Customer Value, ch. 2, in Rust Roland T. and Oliver Richard L., 1994, Service Quality - New Directions in Theory and Practice, Sage Publications, London.

Holloway Christopher J., 1981, The Guided Tour; A Sociological Approach, Annals of Tourism Research, pp. 377- 402.

Hovland Carl I., and Harvey O.J., and Sherif Muzafer, 1957, Assimilation and Contrast Effects in Reactions to Communication and Attitude Change, Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, Vol. 55, pp. 244-252.

Howard K. and Sharp J.A., 1983, The Management of a Student Research Project, Gower Publishing, Aldershot.

Howard John A. and Sheth Jagdish N., 1969, The Theory of Buyer Behavior, John Wiley and Sons, New York.

Hunt James M., 1979, Consumer Responses to Inequitable Economic Exchanges: An Attribution Theoretical Analysis, in Hunt H. Keith and Day Ralph L., Proceedings of Fourth Annual Conference on Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behaviour, Bloomington, Indiana University, pp. 23-28.

Hughes Christina, From Field Notes to Dissertation: analyzing the stepfamily, ch. 2, in Bryman Alan and Burgess Robert G., eds., 1994, Analyzing Qualitative Data, Routledge, London, pp. 35-46.

Huppertz John W., Arenson Sidney J., and Evans Richard H., 1978, An Application of Equity Theory to Buyer-Seller Exchange Situations, Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. XV, pp. 250-260.

Iacobucci Dawn, Grayson Kent A., and Ostrom Amy L., The Calculus of Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction, in Swartz Teresa A., Bowen David E., and Brown Stephen W., eds., 1994, Advances in Services Marketing and Management Research and Practice, vol. 3, pp. 1-67, Jai Press, London.

Inayatullah Sohail, 1995, Rethinking Tourism: Unfamiliar Histories and Alternative Futures, Tourism Management, Vol. 16, No. 6, pp. 411-415.

Izard Carroll E., 1977, Human Emotions, Plenum Press, New York and London.

Jacoby Jacob and Jaccard James J., 1981, The Sources, Meaning, and Validity of Consumer Complaint Behavior: A Psychological Analysis, Journal of Retailing, Vol. 57, No. 3.

Jacoby Jacob, Consumer Research: Telling It Like It Is, in Wallendorf Melanie and Zaltman Gerald, Readings in Consumer Behaviour: Individuals, Groups, and Organisations, John Wiley, New York.

Jacoby Jacob and Olson Jerry C., 1985, Perceived Quality - How Consumers View Stores and Merchandise, Lexington Books, Lexington, Mass.

Johnson John M., 1975, Doing Field Research, The Free Press, London.

Jorgensen Danny L., 1989, Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies, Sage Publications, London.

Kelley Harold H. and Michela John L., 1980, Attribution Theory and Research, Annual Review of Psychology, Vol. 30, pp. 457-501.

Kelley Harold H., and Thibaut John W., 1978, Interpersonal Relations, John Wiley and Sons, New York.

Krippendorf Jost, 1989, The Holiday Makers, Butterworth Heinemann, oxford.

Krishnan S. and Valle Valerie A., 1979, Dissatisfaction Attributions and Consumer Complaint Behaviour, Advances in Consumer Research, Vol. 6, pp. 445-449.

Kuhn, Thomas S., 1970, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.

Kvale Steinar, 1996, InterViews - An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing, Sage Publications, London.

Langer Ellen J., 1975, The Illusion of Control, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol. 32, No. 2, 311-328.

Law Jennifer, Pearce Philip L., and Woods Barbara, 1995, Stress and Coping in Tourist Attraction Employees, Tourism Management, Vol. 16, No., 4, pp. 277-284.

Laws Eric, 1986, Identifying and Managing the Consumerist Gap, Service Industries Journal, vol. 6, no. 2, pp.131-143.

Laws Eric, 1990, Effectiveness of Airline Responses to Passengers During Service Interruptions - A Consumerist Gap Analysis, Tourism Research in to the 1990s, Conference Paper, Durham University, pp. 1- 28.

Laws Eric, 1997, Managing Packaged Tourism, International Thomson Business Press, London.

Lawson Rob, Gnoth Jurgen and Paulin Kerry, 1995, Tourist Awareness of Prices for Attractions and Activities, Journal of Travel Research, Summer, pp. 3-10.

La Barbera Priscilla A. and Mazursky David, 1983, A Longitudinal Assessment of Consumer Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction: The Dynamic Aspect of the Cognitive Process, Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. XX, pp. 393-404.

La Tour Stephen A. and Peat Nancy C., 1979, Conceptual and Methodological Issues in Consumer Satisfaction Research, Advances in Consumer Research, Vol. 6, pp. 431-437.

La Tour Stephen A. and Peat Nancy C., 1980, The Role of Situationally-Produced Expectations, Others' Experiences, and Prior Experience in Determining Consumer Satisfaction, Advances in Consumer Research, Vol. 7, pp. 588-592.

Leavitt H. J., 1954, A Note on Some Experimental Findings about the Meaning of Price, Journal of Business, 27, pp. 205-210.

Lickorish L., 1987, Trends in Industrialised Countries, Tourism Management, pp. 92-95.

Lilien Gary L. and Kotler Philip, 1983, Marketing Decision Making, Harper Row, New York.

Lopez Elsa M., 1980, The Effect of Leadership Style on Satisfaction Levels of Tour Quality, Spring, Journal of Travel Research, Spring, pp.20-23.

Lord Charles G., Ross Lee, Lepper Mark R., 1979, Biased Assimilation and Attitude Polarisation: The Effects of Prior Theories on Subsequently Considered Evidence, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol. 37, No. 11, pp. 2098-2109.

Lovelock Christopher H., Why Marketing Management Needs to be Different for Services, in Donnelly James H. and George William R., 1981, Marketing of Services, American Marketing Association, Chicago, Illinois.

Lovelock Christopher H., Langeard Eric, Bateson John E.G., Eiglier Pierre, Some Organisational Problems Facing Marketing in the Service Sector, in Donnelly James H. and George William R., 1981, Marketing of Services, American Marketing Association, Chicago, Illinois, pp. 168-171.

Lovelock Christopher H., 1983, Classifying Services to Gain Strategic Marketing Insights, Journal of Marketing, 47, pp. 9-20.

Lovelock Christopher, Developing and Managing the Customer-Service Function in the Service Sector, in Czepiel John A., Solomon Michael R., Surprenant Carol F., 1985, The Service Encounter, ch. 18, Lexington Books, Lexington, Massachusetts.

MacCannell Dean, 1992, Empty Meeting Grounds: The Tourist Papers, Routledge, London and New York.

Maddox R. Neil, 1985, Measuring Satisfaction with Tourism, Journal of Travel Research, Winter, pp. 2-5.

Malinowski B., 1922, Argonauts of the Western Pacific, Routledge, London.

Mangold W. Glynn and Babakus Emin, 1991, Service Quality: The Front Stage vs. The Back-Stage Perspective, The Journal of Services Marketing, Vol. 5, No. 4, pp. 59-70.

Mano Haim and Oliver Richard L., 1993, Assessing the Dimensionality and Structure of the Consumption Experience: Evaluation, Feeling, and Satisfaction, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 20, pp.451-466.

March Roger, 1994, Tourism Marketing Myopia, Tourism Management, Vol. 15 (6), pp. 411-415.

Maslow A.H., 1943, A Theory of Human Motivation, Psychological Review, 50, pp. 370-396.

Mattsson Jan, Improving Service Quality in Person-to-Person Encounters: Integrating Findings from a Multi-disciplinary Review, The Services Industries Journal, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 45-61.

Mayo Jr. Edward J. and Jarvis Lance P., 1981, The Psychology of Leisure and Travel, CBI Publishing Company Inc., Boston, Mass.

Mazenec Josef A., 1989, Consumer Behaviour in Tourism, in Tourism Marketing and Management Handbook, Witt S.F. and Moutinho L., eds., Prentice Hall, London, pp. 63-68

Mazursky David, 1989, Past Experience and Future Tourism Decisions, Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 16, pp. 333-344.

McCallum J. Richard and Harrison Wayne, Interdependence in the Service Encounter, in Czepiel John A., Solomon Michael R., Surprenant Carol F., 1985, The Service Encounter, ch.3, Lexington Books, Lexington, Massachusetts.

Mehrabian Albert and Russell James A., 1974, An Approach to Environmental Psychology, MIT, Cambridge, MA.

Middleton Victor T.C., 1991, Whither the Package Tour?, Tourism Management, September 1991.

Middleton Victor T.C., 1994, Marketing in Travel and Tourism, 2nd edn., Butterworth Heinemann, Oxford.

Miles Matthew B. and Huberman A. Michael, 1994, Qualitative Data Analysis, Sage Publications, London.

Miller John A., 1977, Studying Satisfaction, Modifying Models, Eliciting Expectations, Posing Problems, and Making Meaningful Measurements, in Hunt H. Keith, ed., Conceptualisation and Measurement of Consumer Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction, Cambridge, Mass., Market Science Institute.

Mintel: Marketing Intelligence, Long-Haul Travel, Leisure Intelligence, Vol. 4, 1992, pp. 1-29.

Mintel: Marketing Intelligence, Inclusive Tours, Leisure Intelligence, Vol. 2, 1994, pp. 1-19.

Mishler Elliot G., 1991, Research Interviewing - Context and Narrative, First Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Mitchell R.G., 1983, Mountain Experience, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Monroe Kent B. and Krishnan R., The Effect of Price on Subjective Product Evaluations, in Jacoby Jacob and Olson Jerry C., 1985, Perceived Quality - How Consumers View Stores and Merchandise, ch. 13, Lexington Books, Lexington, Mass.

Mossberg Lena Larsson, 1995, Tour Leaders and their Importance in Charter Tours, Tourism Management, Vol. 16, No. 6, pp. 437-445.

Moutinho Luiz, 1989, Tourism Marketing Research, in Tourism Marketing and Management Handbook, Witt S.F. and Moutinho L., eds., Prentice Hall, London, pp. 521-524

Nash Dennison and Smith Valene L., 1991, Anthropology and Tourism, Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 18, pp. 12-25.

Nicosia, F. M., 1966, Consumer Decision Processes: Marketing and Advertising Implications, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs.

Okely Judith, 1994, Thinking Through Fieldwork, ch. 1, in Bryman Alan and Burgess Robert G., eds., Analyzing Qualitative Data, Routledge, London, pp. 19-34.

Olander, Folke, 1977, Consumer Satisfaction: A Sceptics View, Aarhus, Denmark: Institus for Markedsokonomi.

Oliver Richard L., 1977, Effect of Expectation and Disconfirmation on Postexposure Product Evaluations: An Alternative Interpretation, Journal of Applied Psychology, Vol. 62, No. 4, pp.480-486.

Oliver Richard L., 1980a, A Cognitive Model of the Antecedents and Consequences of Satisfaction Decisions, Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. XVII, pp.460-469.

Oliver Richard L., 1980b, Conceptualising and Measurement of Disconfirmation Perceptions in the Prediction of Consumer Satisfaction, in Hunt H. Keith and Day Ralph L., Proceedings of Fourth Annual Conference on Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behaviour, Bloomington, Indiana University, pp. 2-6.

Oliver Richard L., 1981, Measurement and Evaluation of Satisfaction Processes in Retail Settings, 1981, Journal of Retailing, Vol. 57, No. 3, pp. 25-48.

Oliver Richard L., 1989, Processing of the Satisfaction Response in Consumption: A Suggested Framework and Research Propositions, CS/D&CB, Vol. 2, pp. 1-16.

Oliver Richard L., 1993a, Cognitive, Affective, and Attribute Bases of the Satisfaction Response, Journal of Consumer Research, pp. 418-430.

Oliver Richard L., 1993b, A Conceptual Model of Service Quality and Service Satisfaction: Compatible Goals, Different Concepts, Advances in Services Marketing and Management, Vol. 2, pp. 65-85.

Oliver Richard L. and DeSarbo Wayne S., 1988, Response Determinants in Satisfaction Judgements, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 14, pp. 495-507.

Oliver Richard L. and Swan John E., 1989 (a), Consumer Perceptions of Interpersonal Equity and Satisfaction in Transactions: A Field Survey Approach, Journal of Marketing, Vol. 53, pp. 21-35.

Oliver Richard L. and Swan John E., 1989 (b), Equity and Disconfirmation Perceptions as Influences on Merchant and Product Satisfaction, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 16, pp. 372-383.

Olson Jerry C. and Dover Philip A., 1979, Disconfirmation of Consumer Expectations Through Consumer Trial, Journal of Applied Psychology, Vol. 64, No. 2, pp. 179-189.

Otto Julie E. and Brent Ritchie J.R., 1996, The Service Experience in Tourism, Tourism Management, Vol. 17, No. 3, pp.165-174.

Parasuraman A., Measuring and Monitoring Service Quality, in Glynn William J. and Barnes James G., 1995, Understanding Services Management, John Wiley and Sons, Chichester, pp. 143-177.

Parasuraman A., Zeithaml Valarie A., and Berry Leonard L., 1985, A Conceptual Model of Service Quality and Its Implications for Future Research, Journal of Marketing, vol. 49, pp. 41-50.

Parasuraman A., Zeithaml Valarie A., and Berry Leonard L., 1988, SERVQUAL: A Multiple Item Scale for Measuring Consumer Perceptions of Service Quality, Journal of Retailing, vol. 64, no.1, pp. 12-40.

Parasuraman A., Berry Leonard L., and Zeithaml Valarie A., 1991, Understanding Customer Expectations of Service, Sloan Management Review, vol. 32, no.3, pp. 39-48.

Parasuraman A., Zeithaml Valarie A. and Berry Leonard L., Refinement and Reassessment of the SERVQUAL Scale, Journal of Retailing, Vol. 67, No. 4, pp.420-450.

Pearce Douglas G., 1988, Tourist Time-Budgets, Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 15, pp. 106-121.

Pearce Douglas G. and Butler Richard W., 1993, Tourism Research: Critiques and Challenges, Routledge, London and New York.

Pearce Philip L., 1980, A Favorability-Satisfaction Model of Tourists' Evaluations, Journal of Travel Research, pp. 13-17.

Pearce Philip L., 1982, The Social Psychology of Tourist Behaviour, Pergamon Press, Oxford.

Pearce Philip L., 1984, Tourist-Guide Interaction, Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 11, pp.129-146.

Pearce, P.L., and Stringer, P.F., 1991, The Psychology and Tourism, Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 18, pp136-154.

Penaloza Lisa, *Atravesando Fronteras / Border Crossings: A Critical Ethnographic Exploration of the Consumer Acculturation of Mexican Immigrants*, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 12, pp. 32-54.

Peterson Robert A. and Wilson William R., Perceived Risk and Price-Reliance Schema as Price-Perceived Quality Mediators, in Jacoby Jacob and Olson Jerry C., 1985, Perceived Quality - How Consumers View Stores and Merchandise, ch. 15, Lexington Books, Lexington, Mass.

Pizam Abraham, Planning a Tourism Research Investigation, in Brent Ritchie J.R. and Goeldner Charles R., 1987, Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Research: A Handbook for Managers and Researchers, John Wiley & Sons, New York, pp. 63-76.

Pizam A. and Sussman S., 1995, Does Nationality Affect Tourist Behaviour?, Annals of Tourism Research, 22 (4), pp. 901-917.

Pizam Abraham and Jeong Gang-Hoan, 1996, Cross-cultural Tourist Behaviour, Tourism Management, Vol. 17, No. 4, pp. 277-286.

Platt J., 1992, Case Study in American Methodological Thought, Current Sociology, 40, pp. 17-48.

Plog S.C., 1990, A Carpenter's Tools: An Answer to Stephen L.J. Smith's Review of Psychocentrism / Allocentrism, Journal of Travel Research, 28 (4), Spring, pp. 43-44.

Plutchik R., 1980, Emotion: A psychoevolutionary synthesis, Harper Row, New York.

Poon Auliana, 1994, The 'New Tourism' Revolution, Tourism Management, 15 (2), pp. 91-92.

Potter Robert B. and Coshall John, 1988, Sociopsychological Methods for Tourism Research, Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 15, pp. 63-75.

Poynter James M., Foreign Independent Tours: Planning, Pricing and Processing, Delmar Publishers Inc., Albany, NY, 1989.

Poynter James M., Tour Design, Marketing and Management, Regents/Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1993.

Read, 1965, in Burgess Robert G., 1984, In the Field - An Introduction to Field Research, Unwin Hyman, London.

Rathmell J.M., 'What is meant by Services?', Journal of Marketing, Vol. 30, No. 4, pp. 32-36.

Reilly Robert T., Handbook of Professional Tour Management, Merton House, Illinois, 1982.

Richins Marsha L., 1997, Measuring Emotions in the Consumption Experience, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 24, 127-146.

Richins Marsha L., 1984, Word of Mouth Communication as Negative Communication, Advances in Consumer Research, Vol. XI, pp. 697-702.

Richards L. and Richards T., 1991, The transformation of qualitative method: computational paradigms and research processes', in Fielding N.G and Lee R.M (eds.), Using Computers in Qualitative Research, Sage Publications, London

Riddle Dorothy L., 1986, Service Led Growth, Praeger Publishing, New York.

Ritchie Jane and Spencer Liz, Qualitative data analysis for applied policy research, ch. 9, in Bryman Alan and Burgess Robert G., eds., 1994, Analyzing Qualitative Data, Routledge, London, pp.173-194.

Rokeach, (1973), The Nature of Human Values, Free Press, New York.

Ross Glenn F., 1993, Destination Evaluation and Vacation Preferences, Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 20., pp. 477-489.

Ross Glenn F., 1993, Service Quality Ideals Among Hospitality Industry Employees, Tourism Management, Vol. 15, No. 4, pp. 271-280.

Ross Glenn F., 1993, Destination Evaluation and Vacation Preferences, Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 20, p. 477-489.

Ross Glenn F., 1994, The Psychology of Tourism, Hospitality Press, Victoria, Australia.

Rubin Herbert J. and Rubin Irene S., 1995, Qualitative Interviewing - The Art of Hearing, Sage Publications, London.

Russo Edward J., 1979, Consumer Satisfaction / Dissatisfaction: An Outsider's View, Advances in Consumer Research, Vol. 6, pp. 453-455.

Russell, 1948, The Problems of Philosophy, OUP.

Russell Dan, 1982, The Causal Dimension Scale: A Measure of How Individuals Perceive Causes, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol. 42, pp. 1137-1145.

Rust Roland T. and Oliver Richard L., 1994, Service Quality, in Rust Roland T. and Oliver Richard L., eds., Service Quality - New Directions in Theory and Practice, Sage Publications, London ch.1.

Rust Roland T. and Oliver Richard L., 1994, Service Quality - New Directions in Theory and Practice, Sage Publications, London.

Ryan Chris, 1991, Tourism and Marketing - a Symbiotic Relationship?, Tourism Management, pp. 101-111.

Ryan Chris, 1995a, Learning about Tourists from Conversations: the over 55s in Majorca, Tourism Management, Vol. 16, No. 3, pp. 207-215.

Ryan Chris, 1995b, Researching Tourist Satisfaction - issues, concepts, problems, Routledge, London and New York.

Saleh Farouk and Ryan Chris, 1992, Conviviality - A Source of Satisfaction for Hotel Guests? An Application of the Servqual Model, in Johnson Peter and Thomas Barry, Choice and Demand in Tourism, Mansell Publishing Ltd., ch. 7, pp. 107-122.

Saleh Farouk and Ryan Chris, 1992, Client Perceptions of Hotels, Tourism Management, pp. 163-168.

Salop S. and Stiglitz J., 1977, Bargain and Ripoffs, Review of Economic Studies, 44, pp. 493-510

Scherer Klaus R., 1982, Emotion as Process: Function, Origin and Regulation, Social Science Information, 21, pp. 555-570

Schneider Benjamin and Bowen David E., 1993, The Service Organisation: Human Resources Management is Crucial, Organisational Dynamics, Spring, pp. 39-52.

Schuchat Molly G., 1983, Comforts of Group Tours, Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 10, pp.465-473.

Scitovsky T., 1945, Some Consequences of the Habit of Judging Quality by Price, The Review of Economic Studies, 12, pp. 100-105.

Seaton A. V., 1996, Blowing the Whistle on Tourism Referees, Tourism Management, Vol. 17, No. 6, pp. 397-399.

Sellitz C., Jahoda M., Deutsch M., and Cook S., 1964, Research Methods in Social Relations, Holt, Reinhart and Winston, New York.

Shostack G. Lynn, 1977, Breaking free from Product Marketing, Journal of Marketing, Vol. 41, No.2, pp. 73-80.

Shostack G. Lynn, Planning the Service Encounter, in Czepiel John A., Solomon Michael R., Surprenant Carol F., 1985, The Service Encounter, ch.16, Lexington Books, Lexington, Massachusetts.

Silverman David, Interpreting Qualitative Data - Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction, Sage Publications, London, 1993.

Smith Craig A. and Ellsworth Phoebe C., 1985, Patterns of Cognitive Appraisal in Emotion, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol. 48, No. 4, p. 813-838.

Smith Stephen L.J., 1989, Tourism Analysis, Longman, Harlow, England.

Smith Valene L., 1989, Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism, 2nd. edn., University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.

de Souto Martha Sarbey, 1993, Group Travel, Delmar Publishers Inc., Albany, New York.

Steenkamp Jan-Benedict E.M. and Hoffman Donna L., 1994, Price and Advertising as Market Signals for Service Quality, in Rust Roland T. and Oliver Richard L., Service Quality - New Directions in Theory and Practice, Sage Publications, London, ch. 4.

Steenkamp Jan-Benedict E.M., 1990, Conceptual Model of the Quality Perception Process, Journal of Business Research, 21, pp. 309-333.

Stewart William P., and Hull Bruce R., 1996, Capturing the Moments: Concerns of *In Situ* Leisure Research, Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, Vol. 5, No. 1/2, pp. 3-20.

Stokes Raymond C., The Effects of Price, Package Design, and Brand Familiarity on Perceived Quality, in Jacoby Jacob and Olson Jerry C., 1985, Perceived Quality - How Consumers View Stores and Merchandise, ch. 14, Lexington Books, Lexington, Mass.

Strauss Anselm and Corbin Juliet, 1990, Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques, Sage Publications, London.

Surprenant Carol and Churchill Gilbert A., 1984, Can Role Playing Be Substituted for Actual Consumption?, Advances in Consumer Research, Vol XI, pp. 122-126.

Swan John, Sawyer Jesse C., Van Matre Joseph G., McGee Gall W., 1985, Deepening the Understanding of Hospital Patient Satisfaction: Fulfillment and Equity Effects, Journal of Health Care Marketing, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 7-15.

Swan John E. and Trawick I. Frederick, 1980, Satisfaction Related to Predictive vs. Desired Expectations, in Hunt H. Keith and Day Ralph L., Proceedings of Fourth Annual Conference on Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behaviour, Bloomington, Indiana University, pp. 6-12.

Swan John E. and Trawick I. Frederick, Disconfirmation of Expectations and Satisfaction with a Retail Service, 1981, Journal of Retailing, Vol. 57, No. 3.

Swarbrook John, 1994, Quality Issues and the Tourism Industry, Insights, ETB, pp. A31-39.

Swartz Teresa A., Bowen David E., and Brown Stephen W., eds., 1994, Advances in Services Marketing and Management Research and Practice, Vol. 3, Jai Press Inc., London.

Swartz Teresa A. and Brown Stephen W., 1989, Consumer and Provider Expectations and Experiences in Evaluating Professional Service Quality, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 17, 189-195.

Thibaut John W. and Kelley Harold H., 1959, The Social Psychology of Groups, John Wiley and Sons, New York.

Tse David K. and Wilton Peter C., 1988, Models of Consumer Formation: An Extension, Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. XXV, pp. 204-211.

TTG, TTG Directory - April 1994 Edition, Tonbridge, 1994.

Turner V., 1969, The ritual process, Chicago , Aldine.

Unger Lynette S. and Kernan Jerome B., 1983, On the Meaning of Leisure: An Investigation of Some Determinants of the Subjective Experience, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 9, pp. 381-392.

Urry J., 1991, The Tourist Gaze, Sage Publications, Beverley Hills.

Van Maanen John, 1988, Tales of the Field - On Writing Ethnography, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Van Raaij Fred W., 1986, Consumer Research on Tourism - Mental and Behavioural Constructs, Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 13, pp. 1-9.

Van Raaij Fred W. and Francken Dick A., 1984, Vacation Decisions, Activities, and Satisfaction, Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 11, pp. 101-112.

Voase Richard, 1995, Tourism: the human perspective, Hodder and Stoughton, London.

Wallendorf Melanie and Brucks Merrie, 1993, Introspection in Consumer Research: Implementation and Implications, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 20, pp. 339-359.

Walster E. et al, 1978, Equity Theory and Research, Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Webb Eugene T., Cambell Donald T., Schwartz Richard D., Sechrest Lee and Grove Janet Belew, 1981, Nonreactive Measures in the Social Sciences, 2nd. edn., Houghton Mifflin, Boston.

Weiler Betty and Hall Colin Michael, 1992, Special Interest Tourism, Belhaven Press, London.

Weiler Betty and Davis Derrin, 1993, An Exploratory Investigation into the Roles of the Nature-Based Tour Guide, Tourism Management, pp. 91-98.

Weiner Bernard, 1980a, Human Motivation, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York.

Weiner Bernard, 1980b, A Cognitive (Attribution) - Emotion - Action Model of Motivated Behaviour: An Analysis of Judgements of Help-Giving, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol. 39, No. 2, pp. 186-200.

Weiner Bernard, 1985, An Attributional Theory of Achievement Motivation and Emotion, Psychological Review, Vol. 92, No. 4, pp. 548-573.

Weiner Bernard, Graham Sandra and Chandler Carla, 1982, Pity, Anger and Guilt: An Attributional Analysis, Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 8, pp. 226-232.

Westbrook Robert A., 1981, Sources of Consumer Satisfaction with Retail Outlets, Journal of Retailing, Vol. 57, No. 3.

Westbrook Robert A., 1987, Product / Consumption-Based Affective Responses and Postpurchase Processes, Journal of Marketing Research, pp. 258-270.

Westbrook Robert A., and Oliver Richard L., 1991, The Dimensionality of Consumption Emotion Patterns and Consumer Satisfaction, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 18., pp. 84-91.

Whyte William Foote, 1981, 3rd. edn., Street Corner Society - The Social Structure of an Italian Slum, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London.

Witt C.A. and Muhlemann A.P., 1994, The Implementation of Total Quality Management in Tourism: Some Guidelines, Tourism Management, Vol. 15, No. 6, pp. 417-424.

Wolcott Harry F., 1994, Transforming Qualitative Data - Description, Analysis and Interpretation, Sage Publications, London.

Wood Liz and Mouncey Peter, Postal Research, in A Handbook of Market Research Techniques, pp. 165-177.

Woodruff Robert B., Cadotte Ernest R., and Jenkins Roger L., 1983, Modeling Consumer Satisfaction Processes Using Experience-Based Norms, Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. XX, pp. 293-304.

Wright Lauren K., Avoiding Services Marketing Myopia, in Glynn William J. and Barnes James G., 1995, Understanding Services Management, John Wiley and Sons, Chichester pp. 33-56.

Wyckham R.G., Fitzroy P.T. and Mandry S.D., Marketing of Services, European Journal of Marketing, Vol. 9, No. 1, 1975, pp. 59-67.

Yale Pat, 1995, The Business of Tour Operations, Longman, Harlow, Essex.

Yin Robert K., 1994, Case Study Research - Design and Methods, Sage Publications, London, 2nd edn.

Youngdahl William E. and Kellogg Deborah L., Customer Costs of Service Quality, in Swartz Teresa A., Bowen David E., and Brown Stephen W., eds., 1994, Advances in Services Marketing and Management Research and Practice, vol. 3, pp. 149-173, Jai Press, London.

Zeithaml Valerie A., How Consumer Evaluation Processes Differ Between Goods and Services, in Booms Bernard H. Donnelly James H. and George William R., 1981, Marketing of Services, American Marketing Association, Chicago, Illinois, pp. 186-189.

Zeithaml Valerie A., 1988, Consumer Perceptions of Price, Quality, and Value: A Conceptual Model and Synthesis of Research, Journal of Marketing, Vol. 52, pp. 2-22.

Zeithaml Valarie A., Parasuraman A. and Berry Leonard L., 1985, Problems and Strategies in Services Marketing, Journal of Marketing, 49, pp. 33-46.

Zeithaml Valarie A., Parasuraman A. and Berry Leonard L., 1990, Delivering Quality Service: Balancing Customer Perceptions and Expectations, The Free Press, New York.

Zeithaml Valarie A., Berry Leonard L. and Parasuraman A., 1993, The Nature and Determinants of Customer Expectations of Service, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 1-12.

Zeithaml Valarie A. and Bitner Mary Jo, 1996, Services Marketing, McGraw-Hill, London.